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THE BOOKLOVER'S LONDON

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MODERN GRUB STREET, AND OTHER ESSAYS

FAMOUS HOUSES AND LITERARY SHRINES OF LONDON. Illustrated by FREDK. ADCOCK

FROM A LONDON GARDEN

ADMISSIONS AND ASIDES

LONDON ETCHINGS

BILLICKS

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

LOVE IN LONDON

THE SHADOW SHOW

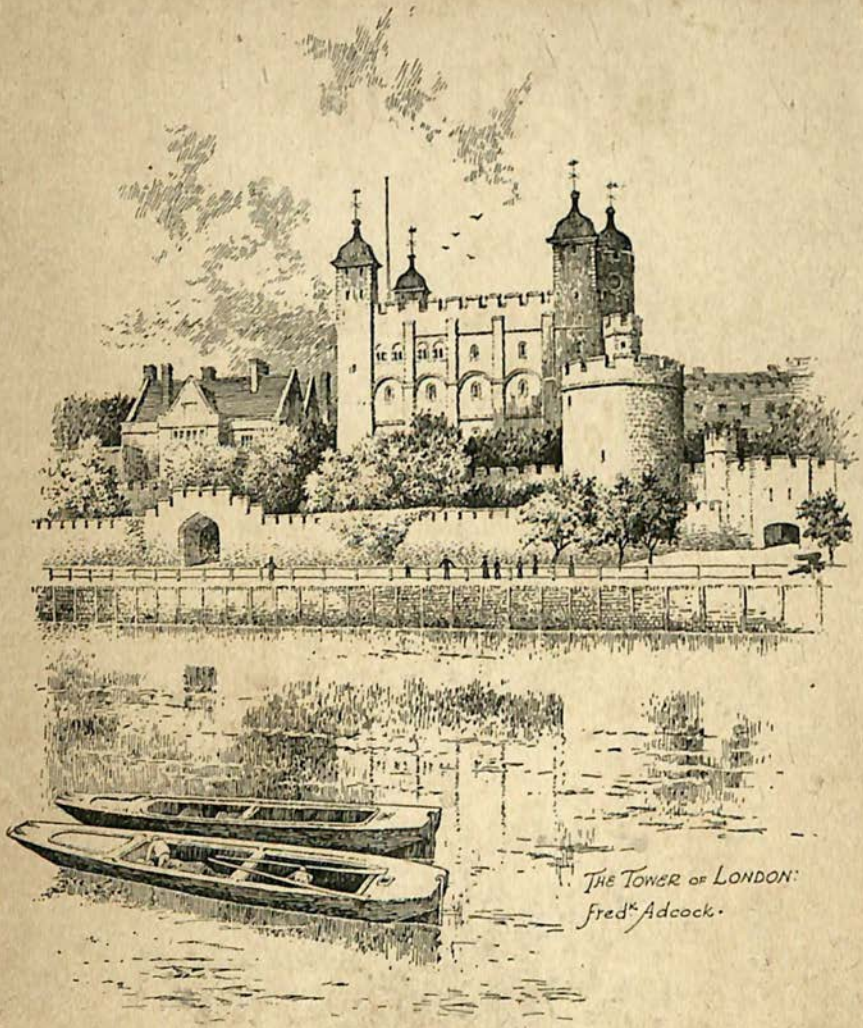
A MAN WITH A PAST

BEYOND ATONEMENT

THE CONSECRATION OF HETTY FLEET

EAST END IDYLLS

ETC.



THE TOWER OF LONDON.
Fred^k Adcock.

"Stay yet, look back with me unto the Tower.
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes
Whom envy hath immured within your walls,
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!"
Shakespeare's "Richard III."

Chapter 6.

THE BOOKLOVER'S LONDON

BY

A. ST JOHN ADCOCK

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ac.

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FREDERICK ADCOCK

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METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

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58888

First Published in 1913

PREFACE

GOING up Cornhill a year or two ago, on a day when snow was falling, I happened to remember that somewhere about there was the court in which Scrooge, of Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, had his home and business premises, and that coming from his bleak tank of an office one cutting, wintry night Scrooge's clerk, Bob Cratchit, was so carried away by the joyous spirit of the season that he " went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times in honour of its being Christmas Eve ; " and somehow Bob Cratchit became as real to me in that moment as were any of the obvious people swarming on the pavement around me. As a matter of fact, he and his like are much more real than most of us ; for in a few years we shall have passed away like shadows; and our places will have forgotten us, but he will still be going down that slide on Cornhill, as he has been going down it already for exactly seventy years. If any so-called real person, walking audibly in undeniable boots, dared to indulge in a

similar pastime upon Cornhill nowadays, he would be promptly stopped by a policeman, and probably locked up; but Bob Cratchit is so potent a reality that no transitory policeman born of woman has power to check his happy outlawry and take him off that slide.

Surely here be truths sufficient to justify the making of this volume. Why should we differentiate between people who were once clay and are now dreams, and people who have never had to pass through that gross period of probation but have been dreams from the beginning? Many books have been written about London's associations with men and women of the more solid kind, who had to pay rent for their houses; I have written two myself; there have been books about Dickens's London and Thackeray's London, but I do not think there has been any book on a large scale devoted to London's associations with the imaginary folk of the novelists and dramatists—with those familiar citizens who are literally free of the city and live where they will in it unfretted by landlords or tax-collectors, and who having once walked into one or another of its streets through certain books are walking in it always for whoever actually knows London. For you know very little of London if you do not know more than you can see of it. So I hope to be forgiven for making this humble and perhaps inadequate

contribution to a branch of history that has been rather neglected.

I have not attempted anything in the way of research. As a fairly miscellaneous reader, my plan has been simply to select a route and to go along it gossiping of what memories I have of the imaginary men and women connected with the places we pass by the way. It was wrong of me to allow divers sometime real people haunting the same ground to intrude upon our visionary company, but I have done so partly for the sake of contrast, and partly because I am equally interested in them and could not resist the temptation to let them come in. If I have gone on any principle at all it has been one of including what appeals to me and leaving out what does not. The banks that stand in Lombard Street are so many dead and unattractive piles of stone so far as I am concerned, but if I knew which particular one Thackeray had in mind when he sent Becky Sharp in a coach to Lombard Street to cash the cheque Lord Steyne had given her I should take an interest in that bank. Even before I was aware that Shakespeare lodged for several years in a house that has been replaced by a tavern at the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell Street, I had a sort of sentimental regard for that spot, because Ben Jonson in his *Staple of News* puts Pennyboy, Senr., to live "in Silver Street, the region of money, a good seat for

an usurer." I am not indifferent to the fact that Samuel Titmarsh was a clerk in an Insurance office in Cornhill; that Mr Carker, showing all his teeth, used to ride up Cheapside on a "gleaming bay" on his road home of evenings from Mr. Dombey's warehouse, which lay in a byway towards Leadenhall Street; that Dobbin and Joe Sedley stayed at Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane; that Ferdinand Armine, of *Henrietta Temple*, and old Sedley, with little George Osborn, of *Vanity Fair*, were fond of roaming in Kensington Gardens; that Clem Peckover and Bob Hewett, of Gissing's *Nether World*, loitered on the Embankment and leaned over the parapet between Waterloo Bridge and Temple Pier looking at the river, whilst Clem was subtly tempting Hewett to murder her husband, so that the two might go off together with his money—I am not indifferent to those and scores of other such memories though I have said nothing about them in these pages. I could take you to Tower Hill and show you where Vincent Scattergood, of Albert Smith's *Scattergood Family*, gazed about him and ruminated, leaning up against the railings of Trinity Square; and the last time I crossed Waterloo Bridge and noticed the shot tower, I remembered that, in the same story, Fogg, the dramatist, who lived in a blind court off Drury Lane, used to cross it too, on his way to the Surrey Theatre, in Blackfriars

Road, and invariably " became preoccupied with endeavouring to render the shot tower available " in his next melodrama. But I wondered whether many were now intimate enough with Albert Smith and his world to take pleasure in such records. It is a long time since I read him myself, and I confess I shall never read him again; therefore you will find I have said little about him. I have omitted other associations for the same reason. Indeed, it is probable that I have omitted a great deal; some things knowingly, for lack of space; some because I forgot them until too late; and some, of course, from sheer ignorance. But for all my sins of omission I offer no excuse, except a frank acknowledgment that, even though I may know as much as anyone else, I do not know all about anything, certainly not about London, and let only him who does cast the first stone!

A. ST. J. A.

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THE BOOKLOVER'S LONDON

CHAPTER I

PERSONAL AND GENERAL

EVERY man finds his own charm in London, and unfortunately it too often blinds him to all the charms that other men have found in it. "I see that the Londoner is also, like me, a stranger in London," wrote Emerson in one of his Journals; "I have a good deal to tell him of it." It is curious, how complacently the visitor or new resident assumes that the mystery, the wonder, the beauty, the fascination of London that is new to him has never been discovered before, and that certainly the poor Cockney takes no interest in his native city and knows nothing about it. In the same spirit of surprise at his own discovery a writer (evidently one of these excited new-comers) noted in my newspaper the other morning that "the average Londoner will not take the trouble to find out that on a very clear day if he looks straight down Bouverie Street he will have a view of the Crystal Palace over in Surrey." Well, I am a Cockney and an average Londoner, but I shall never go out of my way to obtain that distracting vision, not because I am indifferent to the charm of London but simply because I do not want to see the Crystal Palace, and do not count any

prospect of it among the thousand and one reasons why I love my birthplace and keep an unfailing interest in it.

You may be irresistibly attracted to London by its glamorous literary or historical associations; by the fulness, variety, and eagerness of its life; by the homely sense of human neighbourhood that enfolds you in its crowded thoroughfares; by the bizarre splendour and pulsing movement of it when all the lamps are alight and the shop-windows flood the tumultuous streets with golden fire; by the mystery and stranger beauty of it when it lies lifeless under the quiet stars and so lonely that you can hear the echo of your footsteps as you go; by the countless real and imaginary romances of men and women who have died and men and women who have never lived that fill its highways and byways, day and night, with dreams and ghosts;—there is such a magic in the very names of many of its streets that, if you know it, when you read them and say them to yourself the long rows of big modern buildings grow as unsubstantial as a mist and fade away and rows of smaller, quainter, more picturesque houses rise in their stead and all old London as it used to be but will never be again closes in about you as by enchantment.

Perhaps this large and general apprehension of the city's witchery is coloured and intensified by feelings and intimate memories peculiar to yourself, and once you are fully susceptible to its manifold, indescribable charm, that view of the Crystal Palace on a clear day really does not seem a joy worth troubling about. It may be well enough for the

casual explorer to make acquaintance with all those "places of interest" listed in the guide-book and then go away and boast that he has seen more of London and has more regard for it than the average Londoner who confesses he has never been up the Monument; but the Cockney, as a rule, looks upon those places of interest as convenient objects intended mainly for the amusement of visitors—the things that he loves London for are not such common public property. When he is exiled and home-sick, far off in Canada or Australia, it is not the Duke of York's column, or even Nelson's, that lifts a beckoning finger in his dreams to lure him back; it is no mental picture of the British Museum or the National Gallery that brings the longing to his heart or the tears to his eyes,—I know what London means to him because I know what it means to me, who was born in it and have grown to manhood in it, so that now I can scarcely walk down any of its streets but my boyhood or my younger manhood has been there before me; something of my past has been trodden into its stones and is as inseparable from it, though none knows anything of this but myself, as all its older, greater memories.

So it comes to pass that the charm of London is largely incommunicable. I cannot realise all that it is to you, nor you all that it is to me, because our experiences, our personal associations with it are not identical. If I were to tell you why a certain doorway in Southampton Street, out of Holborn, is the saddest place in all London to me, and why it is I can never think of St. Swithin's Lane without seeing it paved with sunshine, you would under-

stand my feelings but could not share them; you could still pass both places without being touched by that secret spell they can always cast upon me. Therefore, I am not attempting anything so hopeless as to distil into these pages the whole ineffable charm of London, but shall be satisfied if I can extract from that some one of its many enchantments to which we are all amenable, blending with it, for purposes of comparison and sharper emphasis, just so little of its more exclusively personal elements as one man may easily communicate to another.

It does not matter where we make a beginning; you cannot go down any street of the city without walking into the past; but I have a private fancy to start from Smithfield Market, partly because I am drawn to it by curious personal ties, chiefly because it looks the least but is really one of the most romantic parts of London. Take the train to Farringdon Street, and as you come out of the station you will see inscribed on the wall facing you "Cow Cross Street, Leading to Turnmill Street," and the sight of that name may remind you that this is the street that was in old days known colloquially as Turnbull Street: it was a shockingly disreputable place of brothels and gambling dens, as you have gathered from frequent references to it in the plays of the Elizabethan dramatists. "Lord, Lord!" says Falstaff, talking of Justice Shallow, in *Henry the Fourth*, "how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. This same starved Justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word a lie." Ursula, in Ben

Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, cries out against Knockem, the horse-courser, "You are one of those horse-leaches that gave out I was dead in Turnbull Street of a surfeit of bottle-ale and tripes?" One of the characters in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* exclaims, on stealing a basket of provisions and finding nothing but veal in it,

> I promised faithfully
> To send this morning a fat quarter of lamb
> To a kind gentlewoman in Turnbull Street.

Justice Nimis, counting up his estate in Randolph's *The Muses' Looking-Glass*, says,

> The yearly value
> Of my fair manor of Clerkenwell is pounds
> So many, besides new-year's capons, the lordship
> Of Turnbull, so—which, with my Pict-hatch grange
> And Shoreditch farm, and other premises
> Adjoining—very good, a pretty maintenance
> To keep the Justice of Peace, and coram too.

Pict-hatch was an infamous establishment in Turnbull Street, and you have Falstaff again, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, rating Pistol, with "Go: a short knife and a throng!—to your manor of Pict-hatch! go"; and Randolph starts the young gallant, Neanias, singing, in *Hey for Honesty, Down with Knavery*,

> Come, beldame, follow me,
> And in my footsteps tread,
> Then set up shop in Turnbull Street . . .

Well, if you walk a few yards to the left as you come out of the railway station, here you are in that

same Turnmill, otherwise Turnbull Street; but there is no sign of a brook here now, nor any of the mills that Stow says used to stand hereabouts, nor any of those rascally haunts with which the playwrights of Shakespeare's time were so familiar. One side of the street is occupied by a blank wall that shuts off the underground railway, and the other by towering warehouses and severely decorous business premises. There is a narrow byway out of it, with a brood of furtive, squalid alleys and quaint frowsy courts, in which Falstaff might still feel comparatively at home, but we are for Smithfield, and will turn back and along Cow Cross Street to get there. But I cannot pass by Peter Lane, which was formerly Peter Street, in Cow Cross Street, without remembering that unhappy urchin, young St. Giles, in Douglas Jerrold's almost forgotten novel of *St. Giles and St. James*: he had been led by the cunning Tom Blast into stealing a horse, which he rode into Smithfield:

"He then walked the pony slowly up Long Lane, and soon as he espied the Blue Posts, faithful to his orders, he dismounted, looking anxiously about him for his friend and instructor, Tom Blast. A quarter of an hour passed, and still he came not. And then, and for the first time, he looked at the stolen goods with lowering eyes, and his heart felt leaden. . . . Anything to be well clear of the pony. With this thought St. Giles had his foot in the stirrup, when he was tapped upon the shoulder by a man plainly and comfortably dressed in a dark-grey suit, wearing a light flaxen wig in tight curls, surmounted by a large beaver hat, scrupulously sleek. He had a broad fat face, with a continual smile laid like lacquer upon it. And when he spoke, he spoke very gently and very softly, as with lips of butter.

"'My dear little boy,' said the stranger, patting St. Giles

affectionately on the back, 'where have you been so long?'

"St. Giles looked—he could not help it—very suspiciously at the stranger; then scratching his head, he observed, 'Don't know you, sir.'

"'I dare say not; how should you, my dear? But you will know me, and for a friend. I've waited for you these ten minutes.'"

This kindly stranger gently twitched the bridle from his hand, and St. Giles felt that the stolen pony was being stolen from him; but his suspicions were quieted; he was rewarded with a guinea, and roamed about London and lived on this for over a week.

"It was on the ninth day of St. Giles's absence from his maternal home, and the pilgrim of London stood before a house of humble entertainment in Cow Cross. The time was noon; and St. Giles, feeling the last threepence in his pocket—turning them over one by one—was endeavouring to arbitrate between pudding and a bed. If he bought a cut of pudding—and through the very window-pane he seemed to nose its odour—he had not wherewithal to buy a lodging. What of that? London had many doorways—hospitable stone-steps—for nothing; and pudding must be paid for. Still he hesitated; when the cook-shop man removed the pudding from the window. This removal decided St. Giles. He rushed into the shop, and laid down his last worldly stake upon the counter. 'Threepennorth o' puddin', and a good threepennorth,' said St. Giles. With a look of half-reproof and half-contempt the tradesman silently executed the order; and in a few moments St. Giles stood upon the King's highway, devouring with great relish his last threepence. Whilst thus genially employed, he heard a far-off voice roar through the muggy air: his heart beat, and he ate almost to choking as he listened to these familiar words:—'A Most True and Particular Account of the Horrible Circumstance of a Bear that has been Fed upon Five Young

Children in a Cellar in Westminster!' It was the voice of Blast; and St. Giles swallowed his pudding, hurriedly used the back of his hand for a napkin, and following the sound of the crier, was in a trice in Peter Street, and one of the mob that circled the marvel-monger of Hog Lane."

Half of Cow Cross Street still remains very much what it was when St. Giles knew it; there is still an old cook-shop there that might well be the very one he patronised, and two doors beyond it is Peter Street. We emerge from Cow Cross Street, and across the road, all along the other side of Charterhouse Street, stretches the heavy, red length of Smithfield Market; the yawning central arcade takes you at a gulp, and mid-way through we glance in at the great gateways to right and left of us and see white-robed butchers moving about in cool, far-reaching groves of gross mutton and beef; trucks loaded with meat pass and repass us; and outside, all round the building, butchers' carts and vans cluster closely, like flies on a bone. Coming out at the other end of the arcade, before us is the broad open space of West Smithfield, and immediately on our left is that Long Lane into which St. Giles rode on his stolen horse. In the centre of the open space a road winds down to a Goods Station of the Midland Railway that is out of sight under the ground upon which the martyrs used to be burned at the stake; beyond, the dull stone buildings of St. Bartholomew's Hospital gloom all along the opposite side of the square and extend into Giltspur Street, and if you say that name to yourself properly the sordid, red Market loses its solidity and rolls away like a cloud; the huge Hospital dwindles to less than a

quarter its present size; the fountain and railed-in garden go from the middle of the square, and the subterranean Goods Station with them; the big new banks and taverns and warehouses shrink and vanish and their places are filled by a picturesque huddle of quaint old red-tiled houses and inns from the windows of which crowds of laughing ladies and gallant gentlemen look out upon a broad green field from which noisy swarms of the common city folk are shut off by stout wooden barriers; and presently up this same Giltspur Street a company of knights, flashing the sun back from their armour, ride in to a tournament. The one familiar object of modern London that rose before them familiarly as they rode in is the glorious old church of St. Bartholomew, that stands at the eastern corner of Smithfield.

But you may read all about this in Stow's *Survey of London*. The church has undergone numerous restorations but much of it remains as when it was first built in 1102 by Rahere, King Henry the First's jester, who turned monk and became its first Prior. Stow tells you, too, of the tournaments, "For example to note:—In the year 1357, the 31st. of Edward III., great and royal jousts were there holden in Smithfield; there being present the Kings of England, France and Scotland, with many other nobles and great estates of divers lands," and after several such records he comes to, "In the 14th. of Richard II., after Froisart, royal jousts and tournaments were proclaimed to be done in Smithfield, to begin on Sunday next after the feast of St. Michael. . . . At the day appointed there issued forth of the Tower, about the third hour of the day, sixty coursers,

apparelled for the jousts, and upon every one an esquire of honour, riding a soft pace; then came forth sixty ladies of honour, mounted upon palfreys, riding on the one side, richly apparelled, and every lady led a knight with a chain of gold, those knights being on the king's party had their harness and apparel garnished with white harts, and crowns of gold about the harts' necks, and so they came riding through the streets of London to Smithfield, with a great number of trumpets and other instruments of music before them. The king and queen, who were lodged in the bishop's palace of London, were come from thence, with many great estates, and placed in chambers to see the jousts; the ladies that led the knights were taken down from their palfreys, and went up to chambers prepared for them. Then alighted the esquires of honour from their coursers, and the knights in good order mounted upon them; and after their helmets were set on their heads, and being ready in all points, proclamation made by the heralds, the jousts began, and many commendable courses were run, to the great pleasure of the beholders. These jousts continued many days, with great feasting, as ye may read in Froisart." And Will Catur, the armourer, was not the only man accused of treason who brought his innocence to the trial by combat and fought his accuser and slew him or was slain by him in Smithfield.

Already, in those years, a horse and cattle market was held in Smithfield every Friday, and already the annual Fair of Bartholomew had beeen started; part of it, devoted entirely to the sale of goods, was

held in the churchyard and in the Close surrounding the church, and part of it, given over to amusements, shows, feastings and general frivolity was scattered all about the open plain of Smithfield itself. The Fairs outlasted the Tournaments, and when the tournament had become a barbarous thing of the past, the London mob made holiday in Smithfield to see the stake driven into the earth here, the faggots piled, smoke rise and many a stubborn martyr burnt alive in the great name of Christianity. Scores of such victims to the childish dogmas of conceited theologians went up to heaven in their chariots of fire from this same ground, but more readily than any other I recall the martyrdom of Anne Askew, less on account of poor Anne herself, perhaps, than because of a certain detailed and amazingly vivid picture that is part of Foxe's narrative of her sufferings. Her chief offence was that she differed with the Bishop of London and his priests concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation; she refused to agree that the sacramental bread was the veritable body of Christ. "As for what ye call your god," she said boldly, according to Foxe, "it is a piece of bread; for a more proof thereof, mark it when you list, let it but lie in the box three months and it will be mouldy and so turn to nothing that is good. Whereupon I am persuaded that it cannot be God." They imprisoned her in the Tower and piously endeavoured to change her mind by stretching her limbs on the rack, till she was so maimed and warped that she could not use her feet; then, as she still failed to see eye to eye with them, they decided that there was only

one way left in which they could get the best of the argument, so, as Foxe has it :

" The day of her execution being appointed, she was brought into Smithfield in a chair, because she could not go on her feet, by means of her great torments. When she was brought to the stake, she was tied by the middle with a chain that held up her body. When all things were thus prepared to the fire, Dr. Shaxton, who was then appointed to preach, began his sermon. Anne Askew, hearing and answering again unto him, where he said well, confirmed the same ; where he said amiss, there, said she, he misseth and speaketh without the book.

" The sermon being finished, the other martyrs (John Lacels, John Adams, and Nicholas Belenian), standing there tied to three several stakes, ready to their martyrdom, began their prayers. The multitude and concourse of the people were exceeding, the place where they stood being railed about to keep out the press. Upon the bench, under St. Bartholomew's church, sat Wrisley, chancellor of England, the old Duke of Norfolk, the Lord Mayor, with divers other more. Before the fire should be set unto them, one of the bench hearing that they had gunpowder about them and being afraid the faggots by the strength of the gunpowder would come flying about their ears, began to be afraid : but the Earl of Bedford, declaring unto him the gunpowder was not laid under the faggots, but only about their bodies to rid them out of their pain, which having vent, there was no danger to them of the faggots, so diminished their fear.

" Then Wrisley, Lord Chancellor, sent to Anne Askew letters, offering to her the King's pardon if she would recant. Who refusing once to look upon them, made this answer again : That she came not thither to deny her Lord and Master. Then were the letters likewise offered unto the other, who in like manner, following the constancy of the woman, denied not only to receive them, but also to look on them. Whereupon the Lord Mayor commanding fire to be put to them, cried with a loud voice, *Fiat justitia.*

"And thus the good Anne Askew, with these blessed martyrs, being troubled so many manner of ways, and having passed through so many torments, having now ended the long course of her agonies, being compassed in with flames of fire, as a blessed sacrifice unto God, she slept in the Lord, anno 1546, leaving behind her a singular example for all men to follow."

These things do not pass away; and I can never cross Smithfield nowadays without hearing that loud cry of the Lord Mayor's thrilling above the dense mob again, without seeing the flames rise about the chained figures of the four martyrs, without seeing on the bench in front of this same old St. Bartholomew's church that little group of elderly, gorgeously attired dignitaries, discussing the probable action of the gunpowder mercifully fastened round the waists of the sufferers and fussily agitated by fears for their own safety. So long as Smithfield remains they keep their place in it for those who know where to look for them and how to see them.

But Smithfield is haunted by other and happier memories. For certain August days of every year, during several centuries and down to less than a century ago, it was all aroar with the business and revelry of Bartholomew Fair. Sometimes the Fair would begin only a day after one of the martyrdoms, and the roistering London crowd would swarm in to make merry and riot among the stalls and booths over earth that was still blackened from yesterday's fires. Look round and you shall note ancient landmarks of those days in the old church, the hospital, and in the names of the streets: in Long Lane, Cloth Fair, Bartholomew Close, Little Britain (though this end of it was Duck Lane in the Fair time), Gilt-

spur Street, Hosier Lane and Cock Lane, the corner of which is the veritable Pie Corner which was once occupied by a famous eating-house of that name and surrounded by cooks' stalls and refreshment tents whilst the Fair was on. The Great Fire of London, which began at Pudding Lane, in Eastcheap, ended by burning down the ancient hostelry at Pie Corner, and a tavern called "The Fortune of War," which stood on the site until about a year ago, exhibited the gilded figure of an obese boy above its doorway, with an inscription to the effect that it was erected in memory of "the late Fire of London, occasioned by the sin of gluttony, 1666." I am glad that the new building now reared on the spot preserves this historic boy in a niche at his familiar corner. There used to be many inns hereabouts that were closely associated with the Fair, but all these are demolished or have been rebuilt and changed their names, except *The Crown*, two doors from Hosier Lane, where, according to Stow, writing in 1589, "the hosiers of old time" carried on their businesses.

There exist in the Guildhall or British Museums quaint seventeenth-century advertisements and handbills from which you may gather something of the wonders exhibited at the Fair, such as :

"Just arrived from abroad and are to be seen or sold at the first house on the pavement from the end of Hosier Lane, during Bartholomew Fair—A large and beautiful young Camel from Grand Cairo, in Egypt. This Creature is twenty-three years old; his head and neck are like those of a deer;" and

"At Mr Croome's, at the sign of the Shoe and Slap, near the Hospital Gate in West Smithfield, is to be seen THE WONDER

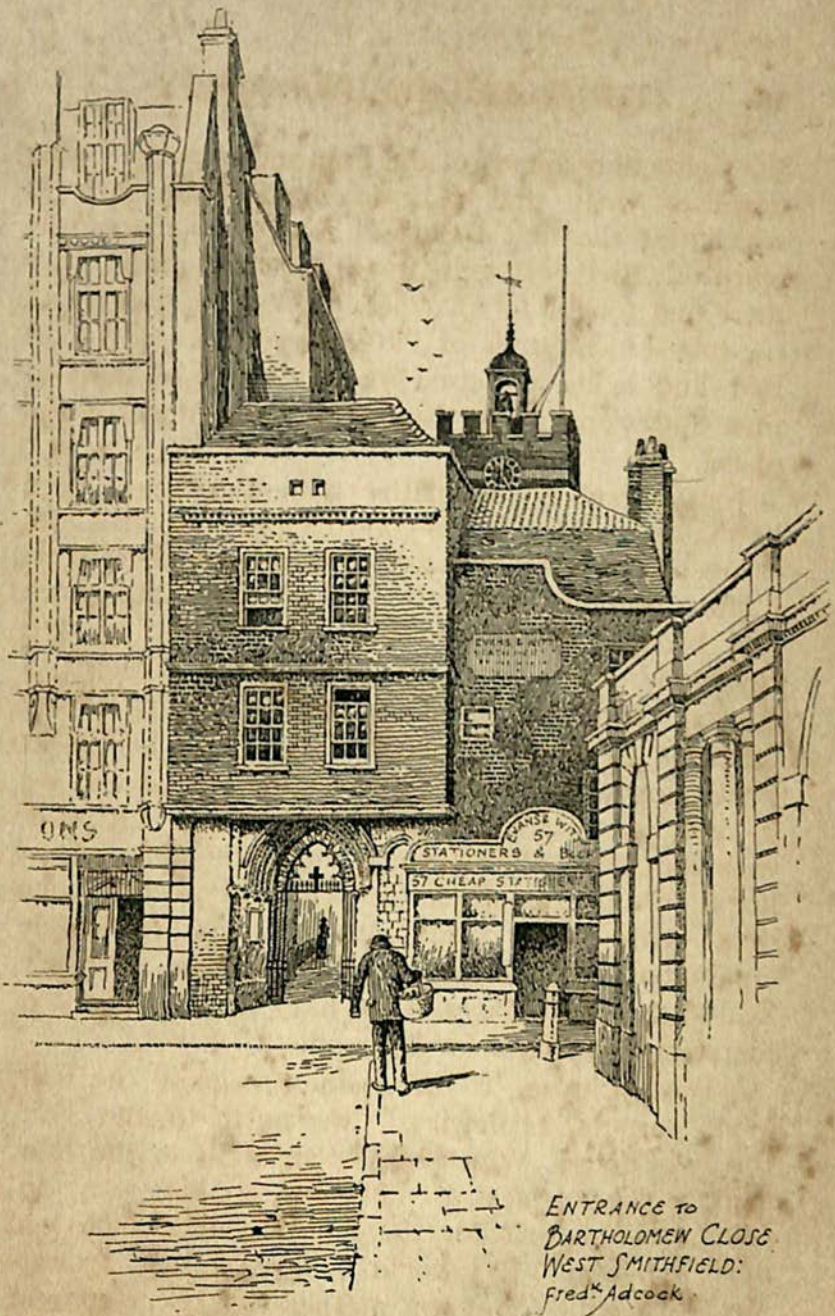
OF NATURE, a Girl above sixteen years of age, born in Cheshire, and not above eighteen inches long, having shed the teeth seven several times, and not a perfect bone in any part of her, only the Head, yet she hath all her senses to Admiration, and Discourses. Reads very well, sings, whistles, and all very pleasant to hear;" and

"At the corner of Hosier Lane, and near Mr. Parker's booth, there is to be seen a Prodigious Monster lately brought over by Sir Thomas Grantham from the great Mogul's country, being a Man with one Head and two distinct Bodies, both Masculine; there is also with him his Brother, who is a priest of the Mahometan Religion. Price Sixpence and One Shilling the best Places;" and there are announcements of an Indian King to be seen at the Golden Lyon, near the Hospital Gate; of a Little Fairy Woman "at the Hart's Horn in Pye Corner"; of a Giant Man on show "between Hosier Lane and the Swan Tavern, at the Saddler's shop"; of "most excellent and incomparable performances in Dancing on the Slack Rope" at "Mr. Barnes's and Mr. Appleby's Booth, between the Crown Tavern and the Hospital Gate;" and among the many faded bills of the plays acted in the Fair is one announcing performances of "an excellent new Droll called 'The Tempest, or, the Distressed Lovers,'" at Miller's Booth over against the Cross Daggers, near the Crown Tavern. The ground was thickly strewn with such Freak Shows and Theatrical Booths, and there are ample records of these, and of the showmen and the actors; Pepys tells you of how he and his friends would go there; and one likes to think of Ben Jonson loitering about Smithfield among

the sights and sounds of the Fair and one day sitting down to write that play of *Bartholomew Fair* in which, for the first time and for ever, some of the multitude that struggled and elbowed each other there and fought for places in the booths and round the refreshment stalls of Pie Corner were individualised and made as actual for us as any of the real men and women who belong to the history of the place.

Jonson had no sympathy with Puritanism, and he makes occasion in his comedy for some incidental satire of the worst features of that sect, then in its infancy, but in a generation or so to rise full-grown and become the ruling spirit of the nation. His first scene opens in the house of John Littlewit, a lawyer. Littlewit has had a hand in writing a play which is to be performed in one of the booths at Bartholomew Fair, and he is anxious to go and see it and to take his wife, Win-the-Fight Littlewit, with him. But she is much under the influence of her Puritanical mother, the widow Purecraft, who lives with them, and both women are largely dominated by the hypocritical Puritan preacher, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, who has secret designs of marrying the widow for her money:

"Win, you see, 'tis the fashion to go to the Fair, Win," argues Littlewit; "we must to the Fair, too, you and I, Win. I have an affair in the Fair, Win, a puppet-play of mine own making, say nothing, that I writ for the motion-man, which you must see, Win." "I would I might, John," answers Mrs. Littlewit; "but my mother will never consent to such a profane motion, she will call it." "Tut,



ENTRANCE TO
BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE
WEST SMITHFIELD:
Fred.k Adcock

"The old, old house that rises, looking as if it were built of the very stuff of dreams, above the gateway of Bartholomew Church."

Chapter 1

we'll have a device, a dainty one," he protests. . . . "I have it, Win, I have it, i' faith, and 'tis a fine one. Win, long to eat of a pig, sweet Win, in the Fair, do you see, in the heart of the Fair, not at Pye-corner. Your mother will do anything, Win, to satisfy your longing, you know."

And this device is successful. Before consenting, Mrs. Purecraft consults her adviser, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, a forerunner of Mr. Chadband, and he, having private hankerings after the flesh-pots, is won over not only to seeing how a visit to the Fair may be allowable but into accompanying the party for their better guidance. He expounds:

"Now pig, it is a meat, and a meat that is nourishing and may be longed for, and so consequently eaten; it may be eaten; very exceeding well eaten; but in the Fair, and as a Bartholomew pig, it cannot be eaten; for the very calling it a Bartholomew pig, and to eat it so, is a spice of idolatry, and you may make the Fair no better than one of the high-places. This, I take it, is the state of the question: a high-place. . . . Surely it may be otherwise, but it is subject to construction, subject, and hath a face of offence with the weak, a great face, a foul face; but that face may have a veil put over it and be shadowed as it were; it may be eaten, and in the Fair, I take it, in a booth, in the tents of the wicked; the place is not much, not very much, we may be religious in the midst of the profane, so it be eaten with a reformed mouth, with sobriety and humbleness; not gorged in with gluttony and greediness, there's the fear; for, should she go there as taking pride in the place, or delight in the unclean dressing, to feed the vanity of the eye, or lust of the palate, it were not well, it were not fit, it were abominable, and not good. . . . In the way of comfort to the weak, I will go and eat. I will eat exceedingly, and prophesy; there may be good use made of it too, now I think on't; by the public eating of swine's flesh, to profess our

hating and loathing of Judaism, whereof the brethren stand taxed. I will therefore eat, yea, I will eat exceedingly."

Thereafter, through all the scenes of the next four acts, you find Littlewit, his wife, his mother-in-law and the Puritan preacher roaming about Smithfield, playing their parts in a good story that develops amidst the hubbub and jollity of the Fair. Apart from two or three of the gentry and their servants intimately concerned in the story, the characters are the puppet-show men, a dupe who keeps one of the clothier's stalls in Bartholomew Close, toy-sellers, a wrestler, a pickpocket, a beadle, watchmen, cooks, eating-house keepers, a man connected with the horse fair, a ballad singer and members of the general rabble. You have a glimpse of the performance in one of the puppet-shows, you see something of the rascalities, the trickeries, the feasting, the buying and selling, the uproarious merriment, the broad humours and all the fun of the Fair, and from time to time the air fills with the multifarious cries and the noise of it. A number of people come straggling past and Leatherhead, the toyman, breaks out at once:

"*Leatherhead.* What do you lack? What is't you buy? What do you lack? Rattles, drums, halberts, horses, babies o' the best, fiddles of the finest?

Enter *Costardmonger*, followed by *Nightingale* (the ballad-monger).

Costard. Buy any pears, pears, very fine pears!
Joan Trash. Buy any gingerbread, gilt ginger-bread!
Nightingale. Hey! (*Sings*)
Now the Fair's a-filling!
O, for a tune to startle

The birds o' the booths here billing
Yearly with old saint Bartle !
The drunkards they are wading,
The punks and chapmen trading ;
Who'd see the fair without his lading ?

Buy any ballads, new ballads ? "

But all these and thousands of other such voices have passed into the silence, and in 1855, after over seven hundred years of lusty life, Bartholomew Fair came to an end. Wordsworth saw something of it in its latter years, and you may picture him, a curiously alien figure, straying about in its pandemonium, to go home and by and by, amid the quiet of his Westmorland hills, put his recollections of it into *The Prelude*, when he comes to discourse on his residence in London :

What anarchy and din
Barbarian and informal, a phantasma
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound !
Below, the open space, through every nook
Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
With heads ; the midway region, and above,
Is thronged with staring pictures and huge scrolls,
Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies ;
With chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
And children whirling in their roundabouts. . . .
The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
Giants, ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
The Waxwork, Clockwork, all the marvellous craft
Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet Shows. . . .

Strange, to pace the drab, busy neighbourhood now and remember all the Fairs it has held and get

the noise of them back into the air and feel the motley multitudes of them billowing and crushing and striving all about you here. Then, with a thought, you sweep them all aside, and picture that seventeenth century young ruffian, Defoe's *Colonel Jack*, coming from picking pockets in other parts of London to try his luck in Smithfield on a market day, his blackguard comrade Will being along with him:

"It fell out one day that, as we were strolling about in West Smithfield on a Friday, there happened to be an ancient country gentleman in the market, selling some very large bullocks; it seems they came out of Sussex. His worship, for so they called him, had received the money for these bullocks at a tavern, whose sign I forget now, and having some of it in a bag, and the bag in his hand, he was taken with a sudden fit of coughing, and stands to cough, resting his hand with the bag of money in it upon the bulk-head of a shop, just by the Cloister-gate in Smithfield, that is to say within three or four doors of it; we were both just behind him. Says Will to me, 'Stand ready;' upon this, he makes an artificial stumble, and falls with his head just against the old gentleman, in the very moment when he was coughing, ready to be strangled, and quite spent for want of breath.

"The violence of the blow beat the old gentleman quite down; the bag of money did not immediately fly out of his hand, but I ran to get hold of it, and gave it a quick snatch, pulled it clean away and ran like the wind down the Cloisters with it, turned on the left hand, as soon as I was through, and out into Little Britain, so into Bartholomew Close, then across Aldersgate Street, through Paul's Alley into Redcross Street, and so across all the streets, through innumerable alleys, and never stopped till I got into the second quarter of Moorfields, our old agreed rendezvous."

You may follow Colonel Jack in his flight and find the streets he names, or you may select one of these

ancient shops beside the Cloisters' gateway—shorn though they be of their bulkheads—as the one outside which the incident took place. But you shall see Colonel Jack again in Smithfield. The officers are on the track of his friend Will, and it is agreed that the Colonel shall fetch away certain stolen plate and valuables concealed in his garret and sell them to raise money for Will to escape abroad:

"If I should offer to sell it anywhere," said I, "they will stop me."

"As for that," says Will, "I could sell it well enough if I had it, but I must not be seen anywhere among my old acquaintance, for I am blown, and they will betray me; but I will tell you where you shall go and sell it, if you will, and they will ask you no questions, if you give them the word that I will give you." So he gave the word, and directions to a pawnbroker near Cloth Fair; the word was *Good tower standard.* Having these instructions, he said to me, "Colonel Jack, I am sure you won't betray me; and I promise you, if I am taken and should be hanged, I won't name you. I will go to such a house" (naming a house at Bromley by Bow, where he and I had often been), "and there," says he, "I'll stay till it is dark; at night I will come near the streets, and I will lay under such a haystack all night" (a place we both knew also very well), "and if you cannot finish to come to me there, I will go back to Bow."

I went back and took the cargo, went to the place by Cloth Fair, and gave the word, *Good tower standard*; and without any words they took the plate, weighed it, and paid me after the rate of 2s. per ounce for it; so I came away and went to meet him, but it was too late to meet him at the first place; but I went to the haystack, and there I found him fast asleep.

Probably that pawnbroker near Cloth Fair was in Long Lane, which runs parallel with the Fair and

is connected with it by a narrow alley; anyhow, Long Lane was for two or three hundred years famous for its pawnshops, second-hand clothiers and gaming houses. Jack Hornet, in Webster's *Northward Ho!* having rigged himself out in a showy second-hand suit calls on his friends to admire his bravery, but Doll is a little ambiguous in her criticism and cries out, "Why, I tell thee, Jack Hornet, if the devil and all the brokers in Long Lane had rifled their wardrobe they would ha' been damned before they had fitted thee thus."

Coming to later days you may read in Thackeray's *Adventures of Philip* how Philip's mother promised to go to the Charterhouse every Saturday to see him, and did not keep her promise. "Smithfield is a long way from Piccadilly; and an angry cow once scratched the panels of her carriage, causing her footman to spring from his board into a pig-pen, and herself to feel such a shock that no wonder she was afraid of visiting the city afterwards." And in *The Newcomes* you go with stately old Colonel Newcome when he "dismissed his cab at Ludgate Hill and walked thence by the dismal precincts of Newgate, and across the muddy pavement of Smithfield, on his way back to the old school where his son was, a way which he had trodden many a time in his own early days." But there are closer and fuller associations with Smithfield in *Oliver Twist* and in *Great Expectations*. You remember how, after Oliver had escaped from Fagin, Nancy and Bill Sikes recaptured him one evening in Clerkenwell and hurried him away towards Fagin's den in Field Lane, passing near Newgate, in which certain

of their friends lay under sentence of death. Let us re-read the whole passage :

"The narrow streets and courts at length terminated in a large open space ; scattered about which were pens for beasts, and other indications of a cattle-market. Sikes slackened his pace when they reached this spot: the girl being quite unable to support any longer the rapid rate at which they had hitherto walked. Turning to Oliver he roughly commanded him to take hold of Nancy's hand.

"'Do you hear?' growled Sikes, as Oliver hesitated and looked round.

"They were in a dark corner, quite out of the track of passengers. Oliver saw, but too plainly, that resistance would be of no avail. He held out his hand, which Nancy clasped tightly in hers.

"'Give me the other,' said Sikes, seizing Oliver's unoccupied hand. 'Here, Bull's-eye!'

"The dog looked up and growled.

"'See here, boy!' said Sikes, putting his other hand to Oliver's throat ; 'if he speaks ever so soft a word, hold him! D'ye mind?'

"The dog growled again ; and licking his lips eyed Oliver as if he were anxious to attach himself to his windpipe without delay.

"'He's as willing as a Christian, strike me blind if he isn't!' said Sikes, regarding the animal with a kind of grim and ferocious approval. 'Now, you know what you've got to expect, master, so call away as quick as you like ; the dog will soon stop that game. Get on, young 'un!'

"Bull's-eye wagged his tail in acknowledgement of this unusually endearing form of speech ; and, giving vent to another admonitory growl for the benefit of Oliver, led the way onward.

"It was Smithfield that they were crossing, although it might have been Grosvenor Square for anything Oliver knew to the contrary. The night was dark and foggy. The lights in the shops could scarcely struggle through the heavy mist

which thickened every moment and shrouded the streets and houses in gloom, rendering the strange place still stranger in Oliver's eyes, and making his uncertainty the more dismal and depressing. They had hurried on a few paces, when a deep church-bell struck the hour. With its first stroke, his two conductors stopped, and turned their heads in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

"'Eight o'clock, Bill,' said Nancy, when the bell ceased.

"'What's the good of telling me that; I can hear it, can't I?' replied Sikes.

"'I wonder whether *they* can hear it,' said Nancy.

"'Of course they can,' replied Sikes. 'It was Bartlemy time when I was shopped, and there weren't a penny trumpet in the Fair as I couldn't hear the squeaking on. Arter I was locked up for the night the row and din outside made the thundering old jail so silent that I could almost have beat my head out against the iron plates of the door.'

"'Poor fellows!' said Nancy, who still had her face turned towards the quarter in which the bell had sounded. 'Oh, Bill, such fine young chaps as them!'

"'Yes; that's all you women think of,' answered Sikes. 'Fine young chaps! Well, they're as good as dead, so it don't much matter.'

"With this consolation, Mr. Sikes appeared to repress a rising tendency to jealousy; and clasping Oliver's wrist more firmly told him to step out again.

"'Wait a minute,' said the girl: 'I wouldn't hurry by if it was you that was coming out to be hung the next time eight o'clock struck, Bill. I'd walk round and round the place till I dropped, if the snow was on the ground and I hadn't a shawl to cover me.'

"'And what good would that do?' inquired the unsentimental Mr. Sikes. 'Unless you could pitch over a file and twenty yards of good stout rope, you might as well be walking fifty mile off, or not walking at all, for all the good it would do me. Come on, will you, and don't stand preaching there.'"

With that, he and Nancy, with Oliver and the dog

move on beyond our radius and vanish into the fog. But a little later, on a cheerless morning when they set out towards Chertsey, where Oliver was forced to take part in that notorious burglary, he and Sikes passed this way again, and incidentally Dickens gives you a vivid picture of Smithfield as it was in the 1830's, when *Oliver Twist* was written :

" Turning down Sun Street and Crown Street, and crossing Finsbury Square, Mr. Sikes struck by way of Chiswell Street, into Barbican : thence into Long Lane : and so into Smithfield ; from which latter place arose a tumult of discordant sounds that filled Oliver Twist with surprise and amazement. It was market-morning. The ground was covered nearly ankle-deep with filth and mire ; and a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area : and as many temporary ones as could be crowded into the vacant space : were filled with sheep ; tied up to posts by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a dense mass ; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs ; the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths and quarrelling on all sides ; the ringing of bells, and roar of voices that issued from every public-house ; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling ; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market ; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid and dirty figures constantly running to and fro and bursting in and out of the throng ; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene which quite confounded the senses.

" Mr. Sikes, dragging Oliver after him, elbowed his way through the thickest of the crowd, and bestowed very little attention on the numerous sights and sounds which so astonished

the boy. He nodded, twice or thrice, to a passing friend; and, resisting as many invitations to take a morning dram, pressed steadily onward, until they were clear of the turmoil and had made their way through Hosier Lane into Holborn.

"'Now, young 'un!' said Sikes, looking up at the clock of St. Andrew's Church, 'hard upon seven! You must step out. Come, don't lag behind already, Lazy-legs!'"

Into Smithfield, from St. John Street Road, came Noah Claypole and his Charlotte, a weedy, grotesque couple, Charlotte carrying their bundle, and as they were making for that disreputable hostelry, *The Three Cripples* in Field Lane, where they also were to fall in with Fagin, it is probable that they turned off along Charterhouse Lane, now Charterhouse Street; and in that same street, as you may learn from *Pendennis*, Mr. Huxter and his wife had lodgings. His wife, you remember, was that pretty Fanny Bolton, daughter of the porter of Shepherd's Inn; Pendennis himself had been wildly in love with her for a while, and whilst he cooled his passion resolutely in absence, Fanny consoled herself with Huxter, a medical student at St. Bartholomew's, in Smithfield, and after their marriage he brought the news to Pendennis, and invited him to call and see them:

"It's in Charterhouse Lane, over the baker's, on the right hand side as you go from St. John's Street," as old Bows who happens to be present explains. "You know Smithfield, Mr. Pendennis? St. John's Street leads into Smithfield. Dr. Johnson has been down the street many a time with ragged shoes and a bundle of penny-a-lining for the *Gent's Magazine*. You literary gents are better off now—eh? You ride in your cabs and wear yellow kid gloves now."

St. John's Street (now St. John's Lane) still retains something of its old-world atmosphere, and in it still is the ancient gateway in the room over which Johnson, because of his shabbiness, used to take a meal behind a screen, whilst his employer, the publisher Cave, was entertaining more affluent guests at dinner. But it is no use looking for that baker's shop, for Charterhouse Lane is all gone, and its successor, Charterhouse Street, is made up of raw new buildings on the right hand, and the long, low, red-brick modern Market on the left.

When Nicholas Nickleby travelled with Mr. Squeers to Dotheboys Hall he started from the Saracen's Head, on Snow Hill, which is out at the other end of Hosier Lane, and the coach came "rattling over the stones of Smithfield" on its way to Islington. And when Pip, in *Great Expectations*, came to London, the coach set him down at the Cross Keys, Wood Street, off Cheapside, about five minutes' walk from the office of that remarkable solicitor, Mr. Jaggers:

"Mr. Jaggers had duly sent me his address; it was Little Britain, and he had written after it on his card, 'just out of Smithfield and close by the coach-office.' Nevertheless, a hackney coachman, who seemed to have as many capes to his greasy great-coat as he was years old, packed me up in his coach, and hemmed me in with a folding and jingling barrier of steps, as if he were going to take me fifty miles. His getting on his box, which I remember to have been decorated with an old weather-stained pea-green hammercloth, moth-eaten into rags, was quite a work of time. It was a wonderful equipage, with six great coronets outside, and ragged things behind for I don't know how many footmen to hold on by, and a harrow below them to prevent amateur footmen from yielding to the temptation. I had scarcely had time to enjoy the

coach and to think how like a straw-yard it was, and yet how like a rag-shop, when I observed the coachman beginning to get down, as if we were going to stop presently. And stop we presently did, in a gloomy street, at certain offices with an open door, whereon was painted MR. JAGGERS.

"'How much?' I asked the coachman.

"The coachman answered, 'A shilling—unless you wish to make it more.'

"I naturally said I did not wish to make it more.

"'Then it must be a shilling,' observed the coachman. 'I don't want to get into trouble, I know *him*!' He darkly closed an eye at Mr. Jaggers's name, and shook his head."

There are some old houses near this end of Little Britain any one of which would serve as Mr. Jaggers's. As that gentleman chanced to be out Pip decided to take a walk and come back, and the clerk advised him "to go round the corner and I should come into Smithfield. So I came into Smithfield; and the shameful place, being all asmear with filth and fat and blood and foam, seemed to stick to me. So I rubbed it off with all possible speed by turning into a street where I saw the great black dome of St. Paul's bulging at me from behind a grim stone building which a bystander said was Newgate Prison." Smithfield is no longer the littered, dirty, noisome spot it was in Pip's day; its whole traffic nowadays is in dead meat which is sold with noise enough but in cleanly and orderly fashion within the Market-walls, the live sheep and cattle going farther north to Caledonian Market, where they are disposed of in a seemly environment and slaughtered as decently and scientifically as may be in sanitary abbatoirs. Returning from his walk round Newgate, says Pip:

"I dropped into the office to ask if Mr. Jaggers had come in yet, and I found he had not, and I strolled out again. This time I made the tour of Little Britain, and turned into Bartholomew Close; and now I became aware that other people were waiting about for Mr. Jaggers, as well as I. There were two men of secret appearance lounging in Bartholomew Close, and thoughtfully fitting their feet into the cracks of the pavement as they talked together, one of whom said to the other when they first passed me, that 'Jaggers would do it if it was to be done.' There was a knot of three men and two women standing at a corner, and one of the women was crying on her dirty shawl, and the other comforted her by saying, as she pulled her own shawl over her shoulders, 'Jaggers is for him, 'Melia, and what more *could* you have?' There was a red-eyed little Jew who came into the Close while I was loitering there, in company with a second little Jew whom he sent upon an errand; and while the messenger was gone, I remarked this Jew, who was of a highly excitable temperament, performing a jig of anxiety under a lamp-post, and accompanying himself, in a kind of frenzy, with the words, 'Oh, Jaggerth, Jaggerth, Jaggerth! all otherth ith Cag-Maggerth, give me Jaggerth!' These testimonies to the popularity of my guardian made a deep impression on me, and I wondered and wondered more than ever.

"At length, as I was looking out at the iron gate of Bartholomew Close into Little Britain, I saw Mr. Jaggers coming across the road towards me. All the others who were waiting, saw him at the same time, and there was quite a rush at him. Mr Jaggers, putting a hand on my shoulder, and walking me at his side without saying anything to me, addressed himself to his followers.

"First he took the two secret men.

"'Now, I have nothing to say to *you*,' said Mr. Jaggers, throwing his finger at them. 'I want to know no more than I know. As to the result, it's a toss-up. I told you from the first it was a toss-up. Have you paid Wemmick?'

"'We made the money up this morning, sir,' said one of the men submissively, while the other perused Mr. Jaggers's face.

"'I don't ask when you made it up, or where, or whether you made it up at all. Has Wemmick got it?'

"'Yes, sir,' said both the men together.

"'Very well; then you may go. Now, I won't have it!' said Mr. Jaggers, waving his hand at them, to put them behind him. 'If you say a word to me, I'll throw up the case.'

"'We thought, Mr. Jaggers—' one of the men began, pulling off his hat.

"'That's what I told you not to do,' said Mr. Jaggers. '*You* thought! I think for you; that's enough for you. If I want you, I know where to find you; I don't want you to find me. Now I won't have it. I won't hear a word.'

"The two men looked at one another as Mr. Jaggers waved them behind again, and humbly fell back and we heard no more.

"'And now *you!*' said Mr. Jaggers, suddenly stopping, and turning on the two women with the shawls, from whom the two men had meekly separated—'Oh! Amelia, is it?'

"'Yes, Mr. Jaggers.'

"'And do you remember,' retorted Mr. Jaggers, 'that but for me you wouldn't be here and couldn't be here?'

"'Oh, yes, sir!' exclaimed both women together. 'Lord bless you, sir, well we knows that!'

"'Then why,' said Mr. Jaggers, 'do you come here?'

"'My Bill, sir!' the crying woman pleaded.

"'Now, I tell you what!' said Mr. Jaggers. 'Once for all. If you don't know that your Bill's in good hands, I know it. And if you come here, bothering about your Bill, I'll make an example both of your Bill and you, and let him slip through my fingers. Have you paid Wemmick?'

"'Oh, yes, sir! Every farden.'

"'Very well. Then you have done all you have got to do. Say another word—one single word—and Wemmick shall give you your money back.'

"This terrible threat caused the women to fall off immediately. No one remained now but the excitable Jew, who had already raised the skirts of Mr. Jaggers's coat to his lips several times.

"'I don't know this man?' said Mr. Jaggers, in the most devastating strain. 'What does this fellow want?'

"'Ma thear Mithter Jaggerth. Hown brother to Habraham Latheruth?'

"'Who's he?' said Mr. Jaggers. 'Let go of my coat.'

"The suitor, kissing the hem of the garment again before relinquishing it, replied, 'Habratham Latharuth, on thuthpithion of plate.'

"'You're too late,' said Mr. Jaggers. 'I am over the way.'

"'Holy father, Mithter Jaggerth!' cried my excitable acquaintance, turning white, 'don't thay you're again Habraham Latharuth!'

"'I am,' said Mr. Jaggers, 'and there's an end of it. Get out of the way.'

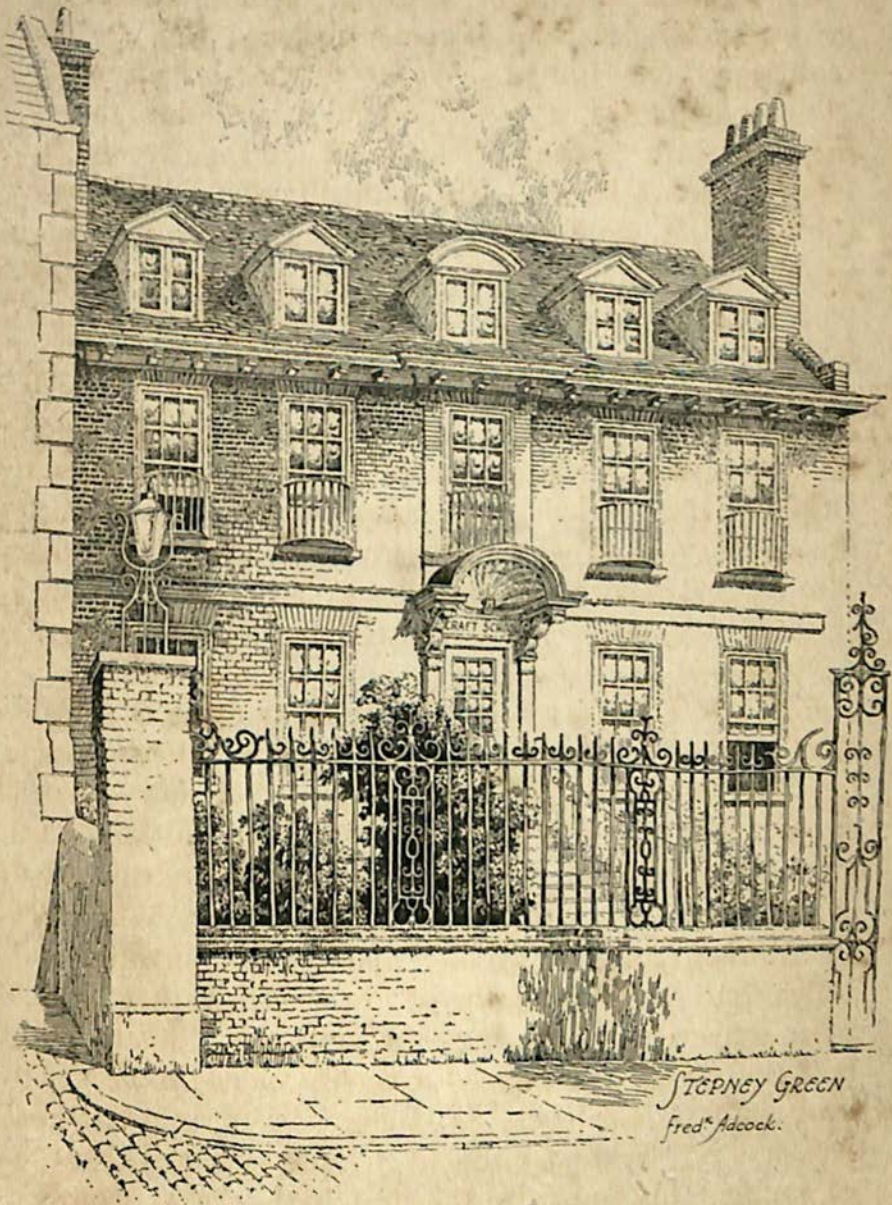
"'Mithter Jaggerth! Half a moment! My hown cuthen'th gone to Mithter Wemmick at thith prethenth minute to hoffer him hany termth. Mithter Jaggerth! Half a quarter of a moment! If you'd have the condethenthun to be bought off from the t'other thide—at any thuperior prithe!—money no object—Mithter Jaggerth—Mithter——'

"My guardian threw his suppliant off with supreme indifference, and left him dancing on the pavement as if it were red-hot. Without further interruption, we reached the front office."

The only gateway now into Bartholomew Close is in front of the church; but I believe there used to be a gateway at the other entrance along Little Britain, and it was at this corner of the Close, therefore, that they left the Jew dancing on the pavement. And this was not Pip's only visit to the vicinity of Smithfield; he was there again and again, and on one memorable occasion came from the office in Little Britain with Wemmick to walk westward and dine with Mr. Jaggers at his house in Gerrard Street, Soho; and didn't he start from here, too, on the even more memorable occasion when he went home with Wemmick and made acquaintance with

"the Ancient Parent"? Strange, how as the years go by such unrealities become real and the world's realities become unreal. We know that on a certain June evening of 1381 Wat Tyler and his rebels marched into Smithfield to meet and parley with King Richard II. and his councillors; that this is the historic ground on which Sir William Walworth treacherously stabbed Tyler whilst they were parleying, and that the dying rebel—a man whom history has grossly misjudged and maligned—was carried into Bartholomew's Hospital, whence his dead body was dragged next day that it might be decapitated and his head exhibited on London Bridge. But Tyler and Richard and their hosts are as very shadows as are Pip and Wemmick and Mr. Jaggers, and Smithfield is as surely haunted by these figures that never existed as by those that have ceased to exist.

Perhaps I have grown the more interested in all that concerns Smithfield because of a private and personal association I have with it. A few years ago I had occasion to search through some old London Directories. If we are to have the whole truth, I was at the time writing an article on Mr. William De Morgan and wanted to identify his birthplace, which had been renumbered, in a street that had been renamed. Glancing through the Directories between 1834 and 1840 I casually came upon my own name: "Adcock, St. John. Sheep and Cattle Dealer, 41, West Smithfield;" and guessed that, of course, this must be the grandfather after whom I had been named. I never knew him; he died some twenty years before I was born, and was



" The house was old, built of red bricks with a shell decoration over the door."
Besant's " All Sorts and Conditions of Men." *Chapter 6*

younger then than I, his grandson, am at this writing; therefore he had never been more than a sort of tradition to me. I had heard stories of him when I was a youngster: he was a farmer near Oakham, and from time to time during the year he sent his drovers afoot with sheep and cattle to London, he himself starting a day or two later to travel up by coach and be at Smithfield Market by the time they arrived there. It was returning from one such journey that he was caught in the snowstorm that caused his death. Yet, somehow, I did not, except in the vaguest fashion, connect him with Smithfield until I lighted on his name in that old Directory; then for the first time he became an actuality to me, with a local habitation. I found from certain old maps of West Smithfield in the 30's that 41 used to stand on the southern side with its front windows looking across into Hosier Lane; it was pulled down half a dozen years ago to make room for the extension of Bartholomew's Hospital; and when I go by there now I have an eerie, an almost dreadful sense of nearness to that dead man who survives in me. I look across the road with his eyes, and see the same old houses he must have seen every time he came from the doorway of his office, and even though he died so long before I was born, when I am here it is easy now to come in touch with him. No doubt he saw something of the Fair in its later years, when the booths and freak-shows rose betwixt his windows and the red-tiled *Crown Tavern* opposite. He was doing business here in 1837, whilst Dickens was publishing *Oliver Twist*, and knew Smithfield when it was exactly as Dickens

sketched it—exactly as Oliver and Bill Sikes saw it that misty morning as they pushed through the uproarious crowd and made their way among the cattle-pens, and turned up Hosier Lane, across the road, and went tramping up it, and will go tramping up it until Dickens is forgotten.

Withal, this ancestor, who has thus become so vividly real to me, is not more real than Sikes and Oliver, than Pip and Mr. Jaggers, Colonel Jack, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, and the other imaginary people who move amidst the myriad Smithfield ghosts of those who were once human and alive, and are as living now as they; he is not more real to me than is Bardolph who, according to the Page in *Henry IV.*, came into Smithfield to buy a horse for Falstaff; he is certainly not more real than Falstaff who was arrested here in Giltspur Street at the suit of Mistress Quickly: she loitered hereabouts with Fang and Snare, the Sheriff's officers, waiting for Falstaff to put in an appearance, and assured them, "A' comes continually to Pie-corner —saving your manhoods—to buy a saddle. . . . Yonder he comes; and that arrant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph, with him. Do your offices, do your offices, Master Fang and Master Snare; do me, do me, do me your offices!"

At this end of Giltspur Street, before we come to Pie Corner, by the way, is the site of the chemist's shop at which the hero of Marryat's *Japhet in Search of a Father* served his apprenticeship. One side of Giltspur Street runs flush with the side of Smithfield; the other side ends in a corner, where the broken square of Smithfield begins to fall away

from it; and here, as Japhet Newland tells you himself, was the home he was sent to from the Foundling Hospital:

"The practitioner who thus took me by the hand was a Mr. Phineas Cophagus, whose house was most conveniently situated for business, one side of the shop looking upon Smithfield Market, the other presenting a surface of glass to the principal street leading out of the same market. It was a corner house, but not in a corner. On each side of the shop were two gin establishments, and next to them were two public-houses, and then two eating-houses, frequented by graziers, butchers and drovers. Did the men drink so much as to quarrel in their cups, who was so handy to plaster up the broken heads as Mr. Cophagus? Did a fat grazier eat himself into an apoplexy, how very convenient was the ready lancet of Mr. Cophagus. Did a bull gore a man, Mr. Cophagus appeared with his diachylon and lint. Did an ox frighten a lady, it was in the back parlour that she was recovered from her syncope. Market-days were a sure market to my master; and if an overdriven beast knocked down others, it only helped to set him on his legs."

But not always; for a day came when a noisy crowd of people went tearing past the shop. Mr. Cophagus, thinking they were in pursuit of a bull, ran out and stood on the pavement to stare after them, but it chanced to be the bull that was doing the pursuing, and it suddenly took the unfortunate chemist in the rear and flung him through his own window on to the counter inside, and then burst in at the doorway after him. Japhet and another apprentice pulled their master down behind the counter, and some butcher-boys captured the beast and dragged it out with the scales swinging on its horns. But Mr. Cophagus was so badly damaged

that he had to call in a rival chemist to attend to his injuries, and one result of the catastrophe was the sale of his business to this rival, which left Japhet unemployed and free to fulfil a long-cherished desire and go in search of his unknown father.

So miraculously haunted is all Smithfield that I have secret yearnings to spend a night in the old, old house that rises, looking as if it were built of the very stuff of dreams, above the gateway in front of Bartholomew Church. There is a sly, eerie, very little attic window at the top of it, and I am almost sure that if I could be up there peering out from it between twelve and one of some still, misty morning, I should see all the varied past of Smithfield reacted under my eyes, as they say a man can relive all the years of his own past in the tense minute of drowning. But I shall never risk making the experiment —for in my heart I am afraid to; and you shall guess for yourself whether I am most afraid of seeing things or of not seeing them.

CHAPTER II

"THE SARACEN'S HEAD" AND NEWGATE

LEAVING Smithfield by Giltspur Street, we come to the corner of Newgate Street, with the new Sessions House, replacing the old Newgate Jail, across the road in front, and St. Sepulchre's church across the road to our right. It was St. Sepulchre's clock that Nancy and Sikes heard striking eight. The first martyr burnt in Smithfield in the reign of Queen Mary was John Rogers, vicar of this church; it was St. Sepulchre's bell that for over two centuries was tolled whenever a prisoner was brought from Newgate for execution, and for nearly as long a period it was customary for the cart conveying the condemned man to Tyburn to stop before the church gate whilst a nosegay was presented to the prisoner. Some thoughtful merchant bequeathed a fund for this melancholy purpose; and another, more morbid and less thoughtful, left another fund out of which the clerk was to be paid to go across the road, the night before an execution, toll a hand-bell (which is still preserved in the vestry) twelve times under the window of the condemned cell and recite a homily to the poor awakened wretch inside, reminding him he was to die in the morning and had better repent. Sixteen-String-Jack is said to have received his nosegay here, at the church gate, and you may

remember that other highwaymen heroes of Ainsworth's novels did not fail to receive a like delicate attention.

Before Holborn Viaduct was erected, Pip would come up Holborn Hill from his rooms in Barnard's Inn whenever he went to call on Mr. Jaggers. He travelled this same way too after he and Herbert Pocket shared chambers in the Temple, and I recall how the two came one morning during those terrible weeks when he had Magwitch, the convict, in hiding —Herbert quitting him there and continuing along Newgate Street to his business further in town. "Early next morning," goes the story, "we went out together, and at the corner of Giltspur Street by Smithfield, I left Herbert to go on his way into the city, and took my way to Little Britain." Before we follow on Herbert's track let us cross the road and stroll down Snow Hill, immediately on the other side of St. Sepulchre's, for half way down the hill is, or was, that famous coaching Inn, the Saracen's Head. It was a pleasant and pious thought to preserve the old name on the new building that has replaced it and to decorate its frontage with a bust of Dickens and statues of Nicholas Nickleby and Mr. Wackford Squeers, for the Saracen's Head used to be Squeers's head-quarters when he was in London. At the foot of his advertisements for new pupils he would announce: "Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily, from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill;" and on one occasion he added: "N.B.—An able assistant wanted. Annual salary £5. A Master of Arts would be preferred." It was this addition to his announcement

that brought Nicholas to the Inn with his uncle, Ralph Nickleby, and he rode from here on the Saracen's Head coach to take up the appointment. Round by the Old Bailey, at that date, and along Newgate Street spread the straggling, disorderly Newgate Market, swarming with meat and fish and vegetable stalls; and Fleet Market was down in the deep valley, where Farringdon Street runs nowadays spanned by the Viaduct. A quiet, dull, drearily respectable business neighbourhood now; wholly unlike the Snow Hill of 1688, when John Bunyan died at a grocer's shop here; and wholly unlike what it was too when Nicholas Nickleby saw it less than a century ago:

"Snow Hill! What kind of a place can the quiet town's-people who see the words emblazoned in all the legibility of gilt letters and dark shading on the north-country coaches, take Snow Hill to be? All people have some undefined and shadowy notion of a place whose name is frequently before their eyes or often in their ears, and what a vast number of random ideas there must be perpetually floating about regarding this same Snow Hill. The name is such a good one. Snow Hill—Snow Hill, too, coupled with a Saracen's Head: picturing to us by a double association of ideas, something stern and rugged. A bleak desolate tract of country, open to piercing blasts and fierce wintry storms—a dark, cold and gloomy heath, lonely by day, and scarcely to be thought of by honest folks at night—a place which solitary wayfarers shun, and where desperate robbers congregate;—this, or something like this, we imagine must be the prevalent notion of Snow Hill in those remote and rustic parts through which the Saracen's Head, like some grim apparition, rushes each day and night with mysterious and ghost-like punctuality, holding its swift and headlong course in all weathers, and seeming to bid defiance to the very elements themselves.

"The reality is rather different, but by no means to be despised, notwithstanding. There, at the very core of London, in the heart of its business and animation, in the midst of a whirl of noise and motion: stemming as it were the giant currents of life that flow ceaselessly on from different quarters and meet beneath its walls, stands Newgate; and in that crowded street on which it frowns so darkly—within a few feet of the squalid tottering houses—upon the very spot upon which the venders of soup and fish and damaged fruit are now plying their trades—scores of human beings, amidst a roar of sounds to which even the tumult of a great city is as nothing, four, six, or eight strong men at a time, have been hurried violently and swiftly from the world, when the scene has been rendered frightful with the excess of human life; when curious eyes have glared from casement and housetop and wall and pillar, and when, in the mass of white and upturned faces, the dying wretch in his all-comprehensive look of agony has met not one—not one—that bore the impress of pity or compassion.

"Near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield also, and the Compter and the bustle and noise of the city; and just on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibus horses going eastwards seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westwards not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coach-yard of the Saracen's Head Inn, its portal guarded by two Saracens' heads and shoulders, which it was once the pride and glory of the choice spirits of this metropolis to pull down at night, but which have for some time remained in undisputed tranquillity; possibly because this species of humour is now confined to St. James's parish, where door-knockers are preferred as being more portable, and bell-wires esteemed as convenient tooth-picks. Whether this be the reason or not, there they are, frowning upon you from each side of the gateway, and the Inn itself, garnished with another Saracen's Head, frowns upon you from the top of the yard; while from the door of the hind boot of the red coaches that are standing therein there glares a small Saracen's Head with a twin expression

to the large Saracen's Head below, so that the general appearance of the pile is of the Saracenic order.

"When you walk up the yard, you will see the booking-office on your left, and the tower of St. Sepulchre's church darting abruptly up into the sky on your right, and a gallery of bedrooms on both sides. Just before you, you will observe a long window with the words 'coffee-room' legibly painted above it; and looking out of that window you would have seen in addition, if you had gone at the right time, Mr. Wackford Squeers with his hands in his pockets."

Later in the story you get another glimpse of the Saracen's Head when John Browdie is staying there, with Tilda his wife, and Nicholas visits it again to see them. But the only part of Dickens's description that can still be identified is the view of St. Sepulchre's tower darting abruptly up into the sky on your right. The market is gone; no crowds ever assemble now in the Old Bailey to witness a public execution, and the hill has been so levelled up and levelled down that no self-respecting horse would think of taking any notice of it. The Compter has gone, too: it used to stand in Giltspur Street where the long, low railings shut in the yard of the new Post Office buildings, which you may notice as we go back to the corner of Newgate Street. If that were Newgate Jail across the road, instead of merely the new Sessions House that has superseded it and reproduces something of its form, we might loiter here over the memories of such glamorous rascals as Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard: they both went hence on their last journey to Tyburn, and before he was captured for the last time, from the old prison the redoubtable Jack escaped over

the roofs of the Newgate shops and reached the street by sneaking down through an attic window. We should have to linger over the memories of scores such as these who, since Fielding and Ainsworth made heroes of them, belong as much to fiction as to fact; over the memories of as many more who belong to fact wholly, and of as many more who belong wholly to fiction; but this is not the place that they knew. Not in this building was Esmond imprisoned; and not in this building did Dennis the hangman carry on his gruesome trade; these are not the very doors that were burst open by Barnaby Rudge and the Gordon rioters; nor are these the same walls that Nancy had in mind when she said she would walk round them all night if Sikes were shut within, as, a little later, Fagin was shut within them; but still fronting the new Sessions House in the Old Bailey, survives a solitary ancient Inn from the windows of which members of the general public looked down to see Fagin hanged one morning, and hereabouts, opening on Newgate Street, was the narrow, grated window of the condemned cell in which the frantic Jew agonised all the night before:

"He cowered down upon his stone bed, and thought of the past. He had been wounded with some missiles from the crowd on the day of his capture, and his head was bandaged with a linen cloth. His red hair hung down upon his bloodless face; his beard was torn and twisted into knots; his eyes shone with a terrible light; his unwashed flesh crackled with the fever that burnt him up. Eight—nine—ten. If it was not a trick to frighten him, and those were the real hours treading on each other's heels, where would he be when they came round again! Eleven! Another struck, before the voice of the previous

hour had ceased to vibrate. At eight, he would be the only mourner in his own funeral train; at eleven——

"Those dreadful walls of Newgate, which have hidden so much misery and such unspeakable anguish, not only from the eyes, but too often and too long from the thoughts of men, never held so dread a spectacle as that. The few who lingered as they passed and wondered what the man was doing who was to be hanged tomorrow, would have slept but ill that night if they could have seen him. From early in the evening until nearly midnight, little groups of two and three presented themselves at the lodge-gate, and inquired with anxious faces whether any reprieve had been received. These being answered in the negative, communicated the welcome intelligence to clusters in the street, who pointed out to one another the door from which he must come out, and showed where the scaffold would be built and, walking with unwilling steps away, turned back to conjure up the scene. By degrees they fell off, one by one; and for an hour, in the dead of night, the street was left to solitude and darkness.

"The space before the prison was cleared, and a few strong barriers, painted black, had already been thrown across the road to break the pressure of the expected crowd, when Mr. Brownlow and Oliver appeared at the wicket, and presented an order of admission to the prisoner, signed by one of the sheriffs. They were immediately admitted into the lodge.

". . . Day was dawning when they again emerged. A great multitude had already assembled: the windows were filled with people, smoking and playing cards to beguile the time; the crowd were pushing, quarrelling and joking. Everything told of life and animation, but one dark cluster of objects in the very centre of all—the black stage, the cross-beam, the rope, and all the hideous apparatus."

Nearly all those windows are gone, like the audience that sat in them; but opposite the spot where the gallows used to be erected there still remains that old tavern, The King of Denmark, and you may be

sure that some of those smokers and card-players sat at its open windows in the long past—not so long past as it ought to be, for the last execution outside Newgate took place less than fifty years ago—and looked down on the ghoulish mobs that gathered to enjoy those grisly tragedies of justice. But if it is hard to look along the staid business thoroughfare to-day and imagine that such things ever happened in it, I find it harder to realise that at this end of the Old Bailey, within a hundred yards of the site reserved to the gallows, was that squalid Green Arbour Court in which Goldsmith lived, yet at the very mention of his name there is a thin, melancholy echo trembling through the rumble of traffic and I can hear him again playing his flute there of evenings, forgetful of his debts and of his duns. Surely, next to the Tower, this ground on which Newgate stands is the grimmest, most darkly tragic square of earth in all London. It was easy enough to pull down the terrible old Jail and cart its stones away, but not so easy to cleanse its atmosphere and wipe out all its searing recollections—the atmosphere of its past envelops it for ever and its ghosts linger homeless to hover about the new building, so that a nameless gloom overshadows it and it begins to wear a brooding and a haunted air already.

In Besant's eighteenth-century story, *The Orange Girl*, William Halliday, son of the Thames Street Merchant, Sir Peter Halliday, tells how his downfall was compassed by his enemies and he was sent a prisoner to the Newgate of that time and of the rascally fashion in which the place was then conducted:

"A man must be made of brass or wrought-iron who can enter the gloomy portals of Newgate as a prisoner without a trembling of the limbs and a sinking of the heart. Not even consciousness of innocence is sufficient to sustain a prisoner, for, alas! even the innocent are sometimes found guilty. Once within the first doors I was fain to lay hold upon the nearest turnkey or I should have fallen into a swoon; a thing which, they tell me, happens with many, for the first entrance into prison is worse to the imagination even than the standing up in the dock to take one's trial in open court. There is, in the external aspect of the prison: in the gloom which hangs over the prison: in the mixture of despair and misery and drunkenness and madness and remorse which fills the prison, an air which strikes terror to the very soul. They took me into a large, vaulted ante-room, lit by windows high up, with the turnkey's private room opening out of it, and doors leading into the interior parts of the Prison. The room was filled with people waiting their turn to visit the prisoners; they carried baskets and packages and bottles; their provisions, in a word, for the Prison allows the prisoners no more than one small loaf of bread every day. Some of the visitors were quiet, sober people: some were women on whose cheeks lay tears: some were noisy, reckless young men, who laughed over the coming fate of their friends; spoke of Tyburn Fair; of kicking off the shoes at the gallows; of dying game; of Newgate music—meaning the clatter of irons; of whining and snivelling, and so forth. They took in wine, or perhaps rum under the name of wine. There were also girls whose appearance and manner certainly did not seem as if sorrow and sympathy with the unfortunate had alone brought them to this place. Some of the girls also carried bottles of wine with them in baskets."

The Governor having ordered him to be taken in and ironed, Halliday admitted, to the great disgust of the turnkey, that he had no money, and as he could not pay to be accommodated comfortably on

the State side, or on the Master's side of the prison, he had to herd with the general swarm of poor criminal wretches who were granted no privileges because they could not afford to buy any:

"The common side of Newgate is a place which, though I was in it no more than two hours or so, remains fixed in my memory and will stay there as long as life remains. The yard was filled to overflowing with a company of the vilest, the filthiest, the most shameless that it is possible to imagine. They were pickpockets, footpads, shoplifters, robbers of every kind; they were in rags; they were unwashed and unshaven; some of them were drunk; some of them emaciated by insufficient food—a penny loaf a day was doled out to those who had no money and no friends: that was actually all that the poor wretches had to keep body and soul together; the place was crowded not only with the prisoners, but with their friends and relations of both sexes; the noise, the cursings, the ribald laugh; the drunken song; the fighting and quarrelling can never be imagined. And in the narrow space of the yard, which is like the bottom of a deep well, there is no air moving, so that the stench is enough, at first, to make a horse sick. I can liken it to nothing but a sty too narrow for the swine that crowded it; so full of unclean beasts was it, so full of noise and pushing and quarrelling; so full of passions, jealousies, and suspicions ungoverned, was it. Or I would liken it to a chamber in hell when the sharp agony of physical suffering is for a while changed for the equal pains of such companionship and such discourse as those of the Common side. I stood near the door as the turnkey had pushed me in, staring stupidly about. Some sat on the stone bench with tobacco-pipes and pots of beer: some played cards on the bench: some walked about: there were women visitors, but not one whose face showed shame or sorrow. To such people as these Newgate is like an occasional attack of sickness; a whipping is but one symptom of the disease: imprisonment is the natural cure of the disease; hanging is the only natural, common and

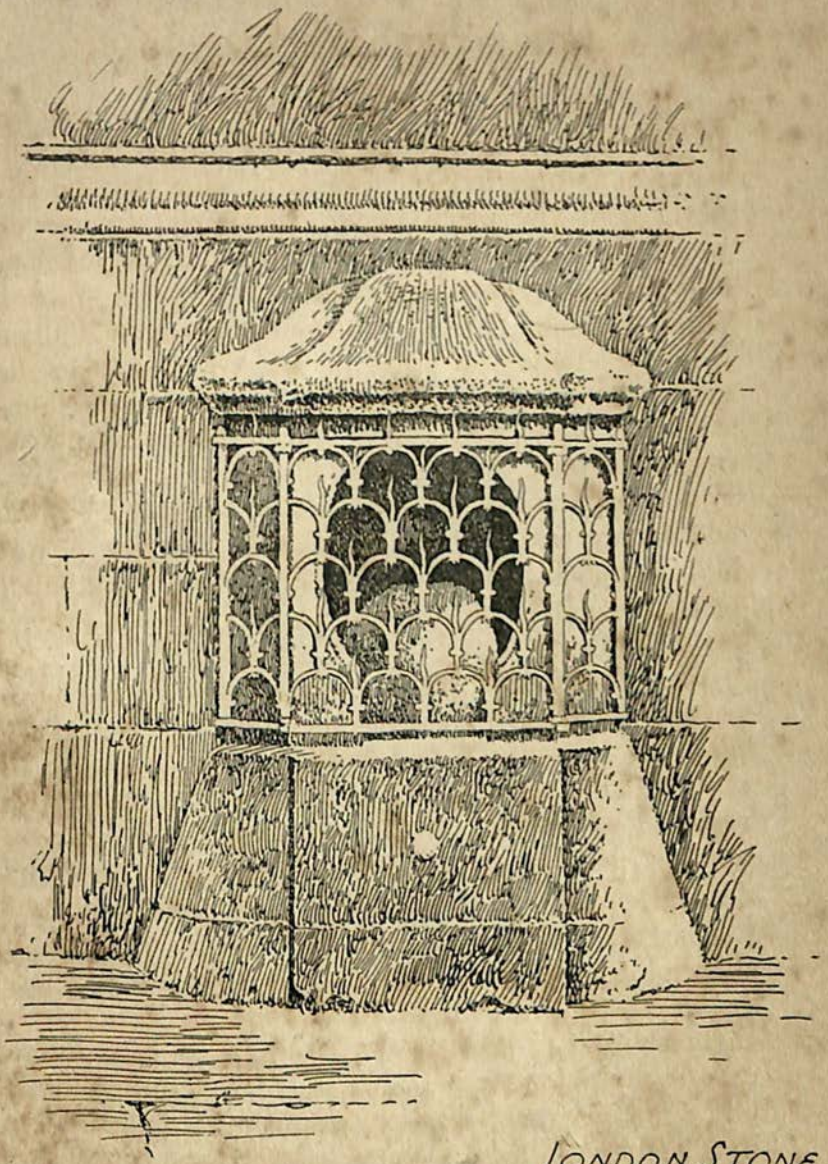
inevitable end when the disease is incurable, just as death in his bed happens to a man with fever."

It was the custom for a new prisoner to pay his footing, and as Halliday was penniless, the other prisoners fell upon him violently and stripped him of his coat and waistcoat, shoes and stockings, that they might sell these and divide the proceeds. I think it should chasten the highest and most respectable of us to reflect that this was the best our ruling caste could do in the way of managing a Prison not a century and a half ago; for the picture is a perfectly true one though the characters in it are fictitious. You have glimpses of a similar state of affairs in the Newgate scenes of Fielding's satirical masterpiece, *Jonathan Wild*; and the plain contemporary records of fact show that neither he nor Besant exaggerated. Later in *The Orange Girl* there is a vivid description of a trial at the Old Bailey; but for a more dramatic and far more memorable trial-scene you must turn to *A Tale of Two Cities*—for it was at the Old Bailey that Sydney Carton stood up in Court and secured the acquittal of the accused, on a point of identity, by calling attention to the astonishing facial resemblance betwixt himself and Charles Darnay.

There is a striking Newgate jail scene in Besant's other eighteenth-century novel, *No Other Way*, where the pretty, shrinking widow, Mrs Weyland, comes here to marry the negro who is condemned to be executed to-morrow—she is hopelessly in debt, and in the event of her marrying, the law would then transfer all responsibility for her debts to her husband. And there is a good account of a trial

at the Old Bailey of comparatively recent years in *The Three Clerks*, but Trollope rather mars the value and the effect of it by confessing that he had never seen the place he is describing; moreover, we have loitered too long about this scandalous old Jail that has been tardily converted into a simple Sessions House. No wonder Besant's William Halliday, telling of how in his younger days he married gentle little Alice Shirley, as poor as himself, and they went on a cheap honeymoon-walk round London, wrote of it like this: "From St. Paul's we walked up the narrow street called the Old Bailey and saw the outside of Newgate. Now had we known what things we were to do and suffer in that awful place, I think we should have prayed for death."

Were we concerned for London's association with persons who have lived in the flesh, we could not pass up Newgate Street without having much to say of Christ's Hospital which, until it was recently replaced by a block of the new Post Office, rose on our left, behind its railings, scarce altered from the days when it numbered Lamb, and Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt among its scholars; nor without more than a casual glance across the road at that glamorous tavern, "The Salutation and Cat," which stands there for ever to the lover of Lamb, though the mere eye may no longer perceive it, with Lamb himself and Coleridge and Hazlitt for ever holding session in its snug parlour. These matters, however, are not for us; but we will, if you like, go a little way into Warwick Lane, to the street in which Probus, the villainous attorney of *The Orange Girl*—the man



LONDON STONE.
CANNON STREET.
Fred^k Adcock.

"Shakespeare had the warrant of Holinshed's Chronicle for making Cade strike London Stone and declare himself lord of the City."

Chapter 7

who was mainly responsible for landing Halliday in Newgate—had his offices:

"Mr. Probus wrote from a house in White Hart Street. It is a small street, mostly inhabited by poulterers, which leads from Warwick Lane to Newgate Market: a confined place at best: with rows of birds dangling on the hooks, not always of the sweetest, and the smell of the meat market close by and the proximity of the shambles, it is a dark and noisome place. The house, which had a silver Pen for its sign, was narrow, and of three stories: none of the windows had been cleaned for a long time, and the door and doorposts wanted paint. . . . The door was opened by an old man much bent and bowed with years: his thin legs, his thin arms, his body—all were bent: on his head he wore a small scratch wig: he covered his eyes with his hand on account of the blinding light, yet the court was darkened by the height of the houses above and the dangling birds below."

There are no dangling birds here nowadays, and no poulterers' shops at all; but there is the same narrow street, though all its houses are changed, and it would still run into Newgate Market, only that the Market has given place to Paternoster Square, and publishers have supplanted the butchers and the poulterers.

Firk, in Dekker's comedy, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, remarks that "a mess of shoemakers meet at the Woolsack in Ivy Lane"—here is Ivy Lane, but it is no use going down, for the Woolsack has vanished from it. Pass the Lane, however, and at the city end of Newgate Street is Panyer Alley, leading into Paternoster Row: a pinched little lane that has been here ever since the fourteenth century or thereabouts. Stow speaks of it as a

passage out of Paternoster Row, "called of such a sign, Panyar Alley, which cometh out into the north over against St. Martin's Lane" (known to us as St. Martin's le Grand). It was the place where panyers, or bread-baskets, were sold when the bakers congregated near by in Bread Street, Cheapside. "If I could meet one of these varlets who wear Pannier-alley on their backs," cries Monopoly, in Webster's *Westward Ho!* "I would make them scud so fast from me that they should think it a shorter way between this and Ludgate than a condemned cutpurse thinks it between Newgate and Tyburn!" But all the Alley has been modernised except the sign after which Stow says it was named: this you shall see built into one of the new walls and covered with glass. It is a crude sculpture of a boy seated on a panyer, is dated August the 27th, 1688 (whence I take it the sign must have been restored and redated, for Stow wrote nearly a century earlier), and proclaims in ancient lettering: "When you have sought the city round, yet still this is the highest ground." Niggling sticklers for accuracy have taken measurements and insist that some part of Cornhill rises a foot higher, but I am not so hungry for facts as all that, and we will go on our way with an easy and an open mind on the question.

CHAPTER III

THE POETRY OF CHEAPSIDE

AT the top of Cheapside a blackened statue of Peel stands on a heavy pedestal and gazes blandly into one of the most famous streets in the world. I admire the good Sir Robert and like him in his proper place, but when you awake to all the romance that glorifies Cheapside you realise that this is no place for such a man as Peel. There is no magic about him; he will stare along the street until he crumbles away and never see anything but the traffic in it; he is as strange and lost among its best memories as Bottom the Weaver was in fairy-land. It should have been some great dreamer up there on the pedestal, not a party politician; it should have been Shakespeare, for instance, because of his association with the "Mermaid," which stood in Cheapside between Bread Street and Friday Street, and carved around his pedestal should have been figures of Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Sir Walter Raleigh, and others of that immortal company who used to assemble at the "Mermaid" with him. Or it should have been Dickens, for all London belongs to him, and he belongs to all London; wherever you go about its streets, you can never get away from him and, better still, you never want to.

Up the first turning on your left, Foster Lane, is "the very narrow street somewhere behind the Post Office" (which is being pulled down while I write) that contained the business premises of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son, Manchester Warehousemen. But before you get so far as to Foster Lane, directly you turn into Cheapside, you will meet Pip again, out of *Great Expectations*. Early one afternoon, he tells you, "I had strolled up into Cheapside, and was strolling along it, surely the most unsettled person in all the busy concourse, when a large hand was laid upon my shoulder, by someone overtaking me. It was Mr. Jaggers's hand, and he passed it through my arm. 'As we are going in the same direction, Pip, we may walk together. Where are you bound for?'" Pip was in doubt, so he consented to dine with Mr. Jaggers, "and we went along Cheapside and slanted off to Little Britain," this end of which lies up in St. Martin's le Grand. But earlier than this, when he first arrived in London, Pip came by the coach to the Cross Keys, Wood Street; and, also before that meeting in Cheapside with Mr. Jaggers, he was round here in Wood Street to meet the coach that was to bring Estella to town:

"If there had been time, I should probably have ordered several suits of clothes for this occasion; but as there was not, I was fain to be content with those I had. My appetite vanished instantly, and I knew no peace or rest until the day arrived. Not that its arrival brought me either; for then I was worse than ever, and began haunting the coach-office in Wood Street, Cheapside, before the coach had left the Blue Boar in our town. For all that I knew this perfectly well, I

still felt as if it were not safe to let the coach-office be out of my sight longer than five minutes at a time; and in this condition of unreason I had performed the first half-hour of a watch of four or five hours, when Wemmick ran against me.

"'Hallo, Mr. Pip,' said he, 'how do you do? I should hardly have thought this was *your* beat.'

"I explained that I was waiting to meet somebody who was coming up by coach, and I inquired after the Castle and the Aged."

Finding he had time to spare, Wemmick invited him to occupy the interval by going with him to "have a look at Newgate;" and they passed out together up Cheapside to Newgate Street and went through the Jail, interviewing those prisoners in whom Mr. Jaggers was interested. Pip escaped from Wemmick and got back to the Cross Keys in Wood Street, still "with some three hours on hand;" but at last the coach came, and he saw Estella's face at the window and her hand waving to him.

There is no Cross Keys in Wood Street now; you may learn from old directories that it was six doors beyond the corner of Goldsmith Street there, and though it is gone and commonplace warehouses cover its site, who can pass the spot without seeing Pip hover about it in that eager impatience, without seeing Wemmick come upon him there, without seeing the coach drive up with Estella's face at the window? And I remember how they dined together at the Inn whilst a carriage was fetched for her.

But Wood Street swarms with other memories. Donne was born in it; Shakespeare lived for several years at the corner of Silver Street, near the northern end of it. And in Wood Street was the

Compter, one of the city's debtors' prisons. Tenterhook, in Webster's *Westward Ho!* bids his servant, "Bring a link and meet me at the Counter in Wood Street;" and Ben Jonson lays a scene of *Every Man Out of his Humour* in "The Counter," where Fastidious Brisk is a prisoner, and Fallace goes to visit him, sighing, "O, master Fastidious, what a pity is it to see so sweet a man as you are in so sour a place!" Also in Wood Street was The Mitre tavern (there is still a queer furtive Mitre Court there, nearly opposite where the Cross Keys was) in which Jonson places two scenes of that same play of his, Puntarvolo, recommending it as a rendezvous, for "Your Mitre is your best house." It was another gathering place of the wits, as you glimpse from a passage in *Bartholomew Fair*, where Littlewit inveighs against those "pretenders to wit, your Three Cranes, Mitre, and Mermaid men! not a corn of true salt, not a grain of right mustard amongst them all. They may stand for places, or so, again the next witfall, and pay twopence in a quart more for their canary than other men. But give me the man can start up a justice of wit out of six shillings beer, and give the law to all the poets and poet-suckers in town:—because they are the players gossips!" Pepys knew The Mitre, before it was destroyed in the Great Fire, and notes, on the 18th September 1660: "To the Miter taverne in Wood Streete (a house of the greatest note in London)." On the 31st July 1665 another entry in his Diary tells that "Proctor the vintner of the Miter in Wood Street, and his son, are dead this morning there, of the plague; he having laid out abundance of money there, and

was the greatest vintner for some time in London for great entertainments." And in the remnant of an old churchyard at the Cheapside corner of Wood Street still survives the tree that reminds you at once of Wordsworth's "Reverie of Poor Susan":

> At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
> There's a thrush that sings loud—it has sung for three years:
> Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
> In the silence of morning the song of the bird.
>
> 'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
> A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
> Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
> And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside. . . .

All our literature is thick-sown with references to Cheapside. If you go back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, when it was Westcheap, and already a famous market-street, you have Lydgate, in his *London Lackpenny*, telling how he came to town, passed through Westminster, and

> Then to the Chepe I began me drawn,
> Where much people I saw for to stand:
> One offered me velvet, silk and lawn,
> Another he taketh me by the hand:
> 'Here is Paris thread, the finest in the land.'
> I never was used to such things indeed;
> And wanting money I might not speed.

But nowhere is London more freely or familiarly used than in the Elizabethan plays; it has never had truer or heartier lovers than the old Dramatists. Of course, their London was a more picturesque

and a smaller place, bounded, roughly, by the Strand on the west and Aldgate on the east; by Southwark on the south, and Clerkenwell, Finsbury, Shoreditch, towards the north; and those who lived in that small, comfortable city were as intimate with it almost as a man is with his native village, hence a playwright laid his scenes in its streets and inns, made casual reference by name to certain of its eccentric street-characters, to its highways and byways, and even its back alleys, in the surety that most of his audience knew those characters and the special characteristics of those streets and alleys as well as he did himself and would readily take the significance of his allusions. Middleton laid the principal scenes of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* in a goldsmith's shop on that thoroughfare, and between Yellowhammer, the goldsmith, engaged in his shop, and Maudlin, his wife, and Moll, his daughter, busied about the house, you have vivid little sketches of the commercial and domestic life of the period running through the rather extravagant plot of his comedy. As an illustration of the freedom with which dramatists then would use a living contemporary: Sims, a porter, comes into the shop with "a letter from a gentleman in Cambridge," and Yellowhammer exclaims, "O, one of Hobson's porters: thou art welcome. —I told thee, Maud, we should hear from Tim." Tim, their son, was at Cambridge, as imaginary a person as Yellowhammer himself; but Hobson was the real Cambridge carrier of those days. He trafficked between Cambridge and London, and was as well known in the one city as the other. Plutus,

in Randolph's *Hey, for Honesty*, reciting his pedigree says, "I am Plutus, the rich god of wealth: my father was Pinchbeck Truepenny, the rich usurer of Islington; my mother, Mistress Silverside, an alderman's widow. I was born in Golden Lane, christened at the Mint in the Tower; Banks the conjuror and old Hobson the carrier were my godfathers." Hobson was something of an eccentric; he would let horses out on hire, but instead of permitting his customers to choose the one each preferred, he insisted on the horses going out in rotation, and so has become immortalised in the proverb "Hobson's choice." More than that when this most glorious of carriers died a generation later no less a poet than Milton, then a young man at Cambridge, wrote two epitaphs, *On the University Carrier, Who sickened in the time of his vacancy; being forbid to go to London, by reason of the Plague:*

> Here lies old Hobson; death hath broke his girt,
> And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt. . . .
> 'Twas such a shifter that, if truth were known,
> Death was half glad when he had got him down;
> For he had, any time this ten years full,
> Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and *The Bull*. . . .
> Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,
> And too much breathing put him out of breath.

Which is curiously reminiscent of that later Cheapside poet, Thomas Hood: he was born in the Poultry, and Milton in Bread Street, where a bust and an inscription commemorate his birthplace. And whilst we are touching on this aspect of Cheapside, one may add that Herrick was born above his father's shop there; that Keats lodged for a while

in rooms over Bird-in-Hand Court, and Coryat, the odd author of the *Crudities*, used to live in Bow Lane.

We are not yet finished, though, with the familiar way in which this real thoroughfare runs through the fictions of dramatists and novelists. Susan, the lady love of Ralph, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, was "a cobler's maid in Milk Street." Young Chartley, in Heywood's *Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (now corrupted into Hoxton), remarks on the "brave things to be bought in the city; Cheapside and the Exchange afford variety and rarity;" and presently his father, old Chartley, newly arrived in London, ejaculates,

> Good Heaven! this London is a stranger grown,
> And out of my acquaintance; this seven years
> I have not seen Paul's steeple, or Cheap Cross.

The steeple, of course, went down in the Great Fire, and Wren rebuilt the Cathedral with a dome; and as for the Cross, which stood midway along Cheapside to mark where Queen Elinor's coffin had rested on its way to burial at Westminster, the Puritans objected to the figure of the Virgin that was sculptured on it and it was removed in 1643. "Let your gifts be slight and dainty, rather than precious," urges Truewit, of Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*. "Let cunning be above cost. Give cherries at time of year, or apricots; and say they were sent you out of the country, though you bought them in Cheapside;" and Littlewit, admiring his wife's new dress, in *Bartholomew Fair*, challenges "all Cheapside to show such another." "Men and

women are born," cries Justiniano, in Webster's *Westward Ho!* "and come running into the world faster than coaches do into Cheapside upon Simon's or Jude's day."

But one might go on in this fashion almost endlessly, and you could gather from these old plays a full and intimate acquaintance with the peculiar characteristics of Cheapside and the life that went on in it then. There is talk enough in them of the *Mermaid* alone to fill a chapter. It stood between Friday and Bread Streets, with side entrances in each. Ben Jonson, in the poem on his celebrated voyage through the London sewer, sings of "the brave adventure of two wights," who

> At Bread Street's Mermaid having dined, and merry,
> Proposed to go to Holborn in a wherry;

and he shows you Meercraft, in *The Devil is an Ass*, reproving the impoverished Everill with,

> Why, I have told you this. This comes of wearing
> Scarlet, gold lace, and cut-works! your fine gartering,
> With your blown roses, cousin! and your eating
> Pheasant, and godwit, here in London, haunting
> The Globes and Mermaids, wedging in with lords
> Still at the table. . . .

There is a London street scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*, where Valentine meets Francisco and Lance: they try to borrow a hundred pounds from him, but he is too broken himself to lend them more than five shillings, and to their plea as to how they are to get money, he airily advises them to take to writing news, or better still:

Cosmography
Thou'rt deeply read in ; draw me a map from the Mermaid,
I mean a midnight map, to 'scape the watches,
And such long, senseless examinations,
And gentlemen shall feed thee, right good gentlemen.

Cheapside has rung with the midnight noises of such roistering gentlemen, coming late from the vanished tavern in no good state to find their way home, and anxious to go by quiet ways where there was no danger of running into any officious Dogberrys. Valentine ends the interview and gets rid of his importunate friends with a hasty, parting invitation :

Meet me at the Mermaid,
And thou shalt see what things——

Which has a pleasant echo in it of Beaumont's rapturous and famous letter from the country to Ben Jonson—

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid ! heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtile flame
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life. . . .

Up King Street is the Guildhall, which plays a part in so many plays from Shakespeare's time to Tennyson's ; but before we come to King Street, there is Bow Church, whose bells rang in the ears of Dick Whittington, out on Highgate Hill, and called him back to be thrice Lord Mayor of London.

I'll get a high-crowned hat with five low bells
To make a peal shall serve as well as Bow,

says Microprepes, in Randolph's *Muses' Looking-Glass*, when, as churchwarden of his parish he is arranging to put a steeple on their church; and that faithful cockney of yesterday, Henry S. Leigh, shows how remembering the sound of Bow Bells when he is far from them will make the true-born Londoner home-sick:

I am partial to trees as a rule;
And the rose is a beautiful flower.
(Yes, I once read a ballad at school
Of a rose that was washed in a shower.)
But although I may dote on the rose,
I can scarcely believe that it smells
Quite so sweet in the bed where it grows
As when sold within sound of Bow Bells.

If the unimagined history of the city were not rather outside our scope, how much we should have to say of stirring episodes in the life of London that have happened in and around Bow Church; of offenders who have been burned and hanged in the open street hereabouts; of the stately processions of Kings, Queens, and especially of Lord Mayors that have glittered up Cheapside and round to the Guildhall! But to-day we will go up King Street with that small boy in Dickens's delightful short story, *Gone Astray*. He was a small boy who had evaded his nurse and was bent, among other things, on finding his way to Guildhall and seeing Gog and Magog:

"I found it a long journey to the Giants and a slow one. I came into the presence at last, and gazed up at them with dread and veneration. They looked better-tempered and were altogether more shiny-faced than I had expected; but they

were very big and, as I judged their pedestals to be about forty feet high, I considered that they would be very big indeed if they were walking on the stone pavement. I was in a state of mind as to these and all such figures which I suppose holds equally with most children. While I knew them to be images made of something that was not flesh and blood, I still invested them with attributes of life—with consciousness of my being there, for example, and the power of keeping a sly eye upon me. Being very tired I got into the corner under Magog, to be out of the way of his eye, and fell asleep. When I started up after a long nap, I thought the Giants were roaring, but it was only the City."

He goes on to relate how, feeling very hungry, he went out and bought a roll and a German sausage, and took them back and ate them in the Guildhall, a friendly stray dog who had followed him fawning round and begging for the scraps. Then after crying a little from very loneliness, he set forth and made his way to Cheapside again, and so on to the Royal Exchange. I am not going to describe Guildhall: you may go and see it, with the Giants in it still. But we have other things to detain us yet in Cheapside. Here, for one, is Bucklersbury—the very name redolent of half a dozen bits in the Elizabethan dramas, though the lane is no longer given over, as it was in Shakespeare's time, to grocers and druggists whose simples and spices made it a place of mingled fragrances, especially in the Spring of the year. "Go into Bucklersbury," Mistress Tenterhook orders her cashier in *Westward Ho!* "and fetch me two ounces of preserved melons: look there be no tobacco taken in the shop when he weighs it;" and in the same play you have Mistress Wafer hurriedly dispatching a boy—"Run into Bucklers-

bury for two ounces of dragon-water, some spermaceti, and treacle." And we are here again in Falstaff's footsteps, for you remember his lusty appeal to Mistress Ford: "What made me love thee? let that persuade thee there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog and say thou art this and that, like a many of these lisping hawthorn buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple-time; I cannot; but I love thee."

There is no street out of Cheapside, however, that has such peculiar attractions for me as Old Jewry. Not because the Jews had a settlement here in the time of William the Conqueror; nor because Lord Beaconsfield was articled to a solicitor here in Frederick's Place; nor because that mysterious person in Gissing's *Town Traveller*, the Lord Polperro, who masqueraded as Mr. Clover and kept a china shop, came to consult his solicitor, Cuthbertson, at Old Jewry Chambers, a gloomy, blind square of a place on the right of the street; but because Ben Jonson laid in Old Jewry some of the chief scenes of his *Every Man in His Humour*. I first read Jonson when I was barely twenty, when my business affairs took me round by Old Jewry almost every day, and for me the street has ever since worn the atmosphere that he gives it in his play.

Except for a house or two in Frederick's Place, and the back of a church, there is nothing in Old Jewry nowadays that can pretend to anything like antiquity; it is as staid and ordinary a thoroughfare as you will find anywhere in London. But at the Cheapside end, on the right, is Dove Court,

and I am persuaded that such a Court was there when Ben Jonson was writing; it retains its original shape, and even in rebuilding it the builders have been unable to get rid of its quaint, snug character. We have lost the gift of building such queer, picturesque byways; they belong to an age that was simpler, gave freer play to its idiosyncrasies, was less severely practical than ours; but you cannot walk into Dove Court to-day, any more than you can walk into that odd Mitre Court in Wood Street, without feeling that you have strayed back into the Elizabethan era. And next door to Dove Court is a modern tavern, but nothing will ever persuade me it is not the lineal descendant of that Windmill Tavern which figures in *Every Man in His Humour*. You find it as the first scene of Act 3: "The Old Jewry. A room in the Windmill Tavern;" and into it come Master Mathew, the town gull, Wellbred, the half-brother of Squire Downright, and the inimitable Captain Bobadil, continuing a conversation:

Mat. Yes, faith, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you.

Wel. Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bob. Your brother delivered us as much.

Wel. Who, my brother Downright?

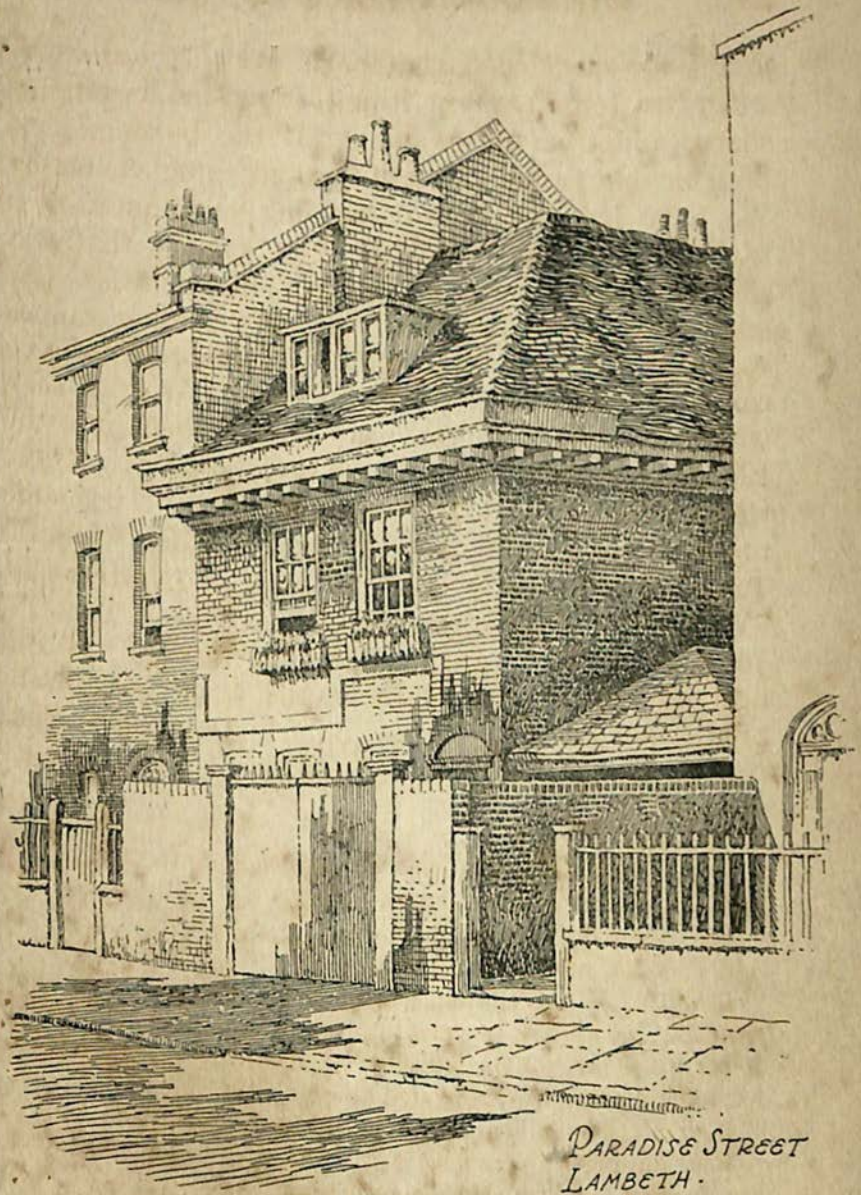
Bob. He. Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a——

Wel. Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob. I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part——

Wel. Well, good Captain, faces about to some other discourse.

Bob. With your leave, sir, an there were no more men living



"Luke Ackroyd, of Gissing's 'Thyrza,' lived in Paradise Street. Bower's shop, too, a small general shop, was in Paridise Street, close by the railway arch.'

upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George!

Mat. Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how: he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion.

Wel. Oh, Master Mathew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few, *quos æquus amavit Jupiter.*

Mat. I understand you, sir.

Wel. No question, you do—or you do not, sir.

At which juncture arrive Edward Knowell and Master Stephen; Knowell incensed that Wellbred has sent him a compromising letter which the messenger delivered into the hands of his father, who opened it; and presently they are joined in this same glorious tavern by Brainworm, the servant of Knowell senior: he comes disguised to warn Edward that his father is in pursuit of him and is now "at Justice Clement's house in Coleman Street, where he but stays my return." Wellbred lodges at the house of the merchant Kitely, also in Old Jewry, but had dated his letter to Edward Knowell from The Windmill, where another scene is placed later in the comedy. One scene, between the elder Knowell and Formal, the justice's clerk, takes place in the open street of Old Jewry; and several scenes are laid in "The Old Jewry. A Hall in Kitely's house," in the first of which you see something of the merchant's business. Downright has just called, but before settling to talk with him, Kitely finishes giving instructions to his clerk, Cash:

> *Kit.* Thomas, come hither.
> There lies a note within upon my desk;
> Here, take my key: it is no matter neither.—
> Where's the boy?

Cash. Within, sir, in the warehouse.
Kit. Let him tell over straight that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with the pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver stuffs
To Master Lucar: tell him, if he will,
He shall have the grograns at the rate I told him,
And I will meet him on the Exchange anon.

After Cash is gone, he explains to Downright that he is an excellent clerk; years ago he had been left a foundling at his door, and he had been at the charge of breeding him up. From which they pass to talk of Downright's half-brother Wellbred, and how he has fallen into evil and ruinously extravagant habits, till they are interrupted by the bell ringing for breakfast, which intimates that our citizens began their day's work several hours earlier than they do in this century.

Everything in the play happens in Old Jewry and within a mile or so north of it. You have scenes in "Coleman Street. A room in Justice Clement's house." Well, Coleman Street is a continuation of Old Jewry, separated from it by Gresham Street; and you have scenes in Moorfields, the locality of which may be traced by the street of that name which is a continuation of Coleman Street, separated from it only by Fore Street; and Moorfields used to stretch away across the City Road to Hoxton (otherwise Hogsden), where old Knowell had his residence, and you have a scene in his house, whence Edward and Stephen set forth to that meeting at The Windmill. Somewhere on the city side of Moorfields was a lane, leading to the shabby home of Cob, the water-carrier, in one of whose rooms the boastful Captain Bobadil has his

lodging, "very neat and private." There is a scene in the lane when the prying Master Mathew noses out the lodging that Bobadil keeps secret and is amazed that a man of his pretensions should "lie at a water-bearer's house! a gentleman of his havings!" and a greater scene inside the house when Master Mathew intrudes upon the privacy of the Captain, who carries off his humiliation with a grand air. Cob, commenting on the situation after the visitor has gone upstairs, observes, "You should have some now would take this Master Mathew to be a gentleman, at the least. His father's an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is (O, my guest is a fine man!), and they flout him invincibly. He useth every day to a merchant's house where I serve water, one Master Kitely, in the Old Jewry; and here's the jest, he is in love with my master's sister, Mrs. Bridget, and calls her mistress; and there he will sit you a whole afternoon sometimes, reading of these same abominable, vile, rascally verses, poetrie, poetrie, and speaking of interludes; 'twill make a man burst to hear him. And the wenches, they do so jeer and tickle at him!"

So, here comes Cob every morning into the city, along Coleman Street, past Justice Clement's house, bringing the day's water-supply to Master Kitely's house in the Old Jewry: he walks in at that scene from which I have quoted and arriving just after the breakfast bell has rung is reproved by Kitely for "coming so late this morning." How it brings the everyday life of the time back to you; the merchant's

business going on all the while from soon after daybreak, and the love-sick Master Mathew making his call in the afternoons to sit in one of the rooms over the warehouse and read poetry to Mistress Bridget and be laughed at by the maids. This is the real life of Old Jewry, for it never dies ; I know all these people better than I know the living strangers passing to and fro in the street, and here, near by Old Jewry Chambers, where Gissing's lawyer, Cuthbertson, had his office, Kitely's house used to stand, on the site that is now taken up by a huge, handsome modern building. I feel that this is where it stood, and who shall confute me ? Once, when I was early in the city, I even went out of my way to walk along Old Jewry before seven in the morning, so that I might be passing at the hour when Cob came toiling across from Coleman Street with his water-supply.

Cheapside was always a notable shopping centre ; latterly it caters mainly for masculine needs, but aforetime the ladies came shopping here as now they go to Regent Street. It was quieter, then, of course ; there was far less traffic in the roads and on the footways ; otherwise it would not have been considered a convenient place for public executions. Stow tells us of many such ; among others he says that in 1351 " two fishmongers were beheaded at the standard in Cnepe, but I read not of their offence ; 1381, Wat Tyler beheaded Richard Lions and other there. In the year 1339, Henry IV. caused the blanck charters made by Richard II. to be burnt there. In the year 1450 Jack Cade, captain of the Kentish rebels, beheaded the Lord Say there. In the year 1461, John Davy had his hand stricken off there, because he had

stricken a man before the judges at Westminster." Pepys was a frequenter of Cheapside and records that a little gibbet was set up in the middle of the street with a picture of Hewson, the regicide, hung upon it, Hewson himself having safely escaped to Amsterdam on the Restoration; and he relates how, in 1664, "some 'prentices being put in the pillory to-day for beating of their masters or such like thing, in Cheapside, a company of 'prentices come and rescued them and pulled down the pillory; and they being set up again, did the like again." It mitigates the present commercial severity of the place to recall these things, but they do not properly concern us, and we will return to our imaginary folk.

We have reached that part of Cheapside which has a place in *Barnaby Rudge*, where you read of the troops being called out and coming into conflict with the mob: "The firing began in the Poultry, where the chain was drawn across the road, where nearly a score of people were killed on the first discharge. Their bodies having been hastily carried into St. Mildred's church by the soldiers, they fired again, and following fast upon the crowd, who began to give way when they saw the execution that was done, formed across Cheapside, and charged them at the point of the bayonet."

The riots and the soldiers were real, you may say, but Mr. Haredale, who belongs to the same novel, was not, and a little before this happened in the Poultry he had come riding in from the other side of the riotous city: he had captured Barnaby's father and was bringing him with him, bent on handing him over to justice and charging him with the murder

he had committed eight-and-twenty years earlier. He was warned on the road that he would find it difficult in the disturbed state of the city to induce any magistrate to commit his prisoner to jail on such a complaint.

"'But notwithstanding these discouraging accounts, they went on and reached the Mansion House soon after sunrise. Mr. Haredale threw himself from his horse, but he had no need to knock at the door, for it was already open, and there stood upon the step a portly old man with a very red, or rather purple face, who, with an anxious expression of countenance, was remonstrating with some unseen person upstairs, while the porter essayed to close the door by degrees and get rid of him. With the intense impatience and excitement natural to one in his condition, Mr. Haredale thrust himself forward and was about to speak, when the fat old gentleman interposed:

"'"'My good sir,' said he, 'pray let me get an answer. This is the sixth time I have been here. I was here five times yesterday. My house is threatened with destruction. It is to be burned down tonight, and was to have been last night, but they had other business on their hands. Pray let me get an answer.'"

The old gentleman was a vintner from Holborn Hill, and as the Lord Mayor, trembling within, was too terrified of the Gordon rioters to do anything either for him or Mr. Haredale, they rode off together and appealed more successfully to Sir John Fielding, the doughty, blind magistrate of Bow Street.

And Cheapside has its fair share of homelier fictitious happenings, such as this in Beaconsfield's *Tancred*, when Tancred is driving on his first visit into the city:

"It was just where the street is most crowded, where it narrows, and losing the name of Cheapside, takes that of the Poultry, that the last of a series of stoppages occurred; a

stoppage which, at the end of ten minutes, lost its inert character of mere obstruction, and developed into the livelier qualities of the row. There were oaths, contradictions, menaces: 'No, you shan't; Yes, I will; No, I didn't; Yes, you did; No, you haven't; Yes, you have;' the lashing of a whip, the interference of a policeman, a crash, a scream. Tancred looked out of the window of his brougham. He saw a chariot in distress, a chariot such as would have become an Ondine by the waters of the Serpentine, and the very last sort of equipage that you could expect to see smashed in the Poultry. It was really breaking a butterfly upon a wheel; to crush its delicate springs, and crack its dark brown panels, soil its dainty hammer-cloth, and endanger the lives of its young coachman in a flaxen wig, and its two tall footmen in short coats, worthy of Cinderella. The scream, too, came from a fair owner, who was surrounded by clamorous carmen and city marshals, and who, in an unknown land, was afraid she might be put in a city Compter, because the people in the city had destroyed her beautiful chariot. Tancred let himself out of his brougham, and not without difficulty contrived, through the narrow and crowded passage formed by the two lines, to reach the chariot, which was coming the contrary way to him. Some ruthless officials were persuading a beautiful woman to leave her carriage, the wheel of which was broken....

"'What am I to do!' exclaimed the lady, with a tearful eye and agitated face.

"'I have a carriage at hand,' said Tancred, who at this moment reached her, 'and it is quite at your service.'

"The lady cast her beautiful eyes, with an expression of astonishment she could not conceal, at the distinguished youth who thus suddenly appeared in the midst of insolent carmen, brutal policemen, and all the cynical amateurs of a mob. Public opinion in the Poultry was against her; her coachman's wig had excited derision; the footmen had given themselves airs; there was a strong feeling against the shortcoats. As for the lady, though at first awed by her beauty and magnificence, they rebelled against the authority of her manner. Besides, she was not alone. There was a gentleman with her, who wore

moustaches, and had taken a part in the proceedings at first by addressing the carmen in French.

"'You are too good,' said the lady, with a sweet expression.

"Tancred opened the door of the chariot, the policemen pulled down the steps, the servants were told to do the best they could with the wrecked equipage; in a second, the lady and her companion were in Tancred's brougham, who, desiring his servants to obey all their orders, disappeared, for the stoppage at this moment began to move, and there was no time for bandying compliments.

"He had gained the pavement, and had made his way as far as the Mansion House, when, finding a group of public buildings, he thought it prudent to enquire which was the Bank."

It was pointed out to him, and near it he came to Sequins Court, in which were the offices of the great financier, Sidonia, whom he was on his way to see.

John Calvert Burley, Besant's heir to many millions, in *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice*, was last seen hereabouts before his complete and mysterious vanishing. An old schoolfellow wrote to those who were seeking him "that he had met John Calvert Burley, looking prosperous, in or about the year 1870, in Cheapside; that he addressed him by name, shook hands with him, and made an appointment to meet him again, which the latter never kept." But this is a common enough mystery in London: always you are hearing of some man who was met one day in a city crowd, and then disappeared as by magic and from that day forth could never be heard of any more. Not so common is that mystery of the elegant, fascinating Mr. Altamont, which belongs to this Mansion House end of Cheapside. The story is told by Thackeray's Mr. Yellowplush. In his youth he was Altamont's "tiger," but was ignorant of his master's occupation.

Altamont " had some business in the city, for he went in every morning at ten, got out of his tilbry at the City Road, and had it waiting for him at six ; when, if it was summer, he spanked round into the Park, and drove one of the neatest turnouts there." Nevertheless, he lodged shabbily with a Mr. and Mrs. Shum out at Islington, and the youthful Yellowplush " slep over the way, and only came in with his boots and brexfast of a morning." Altamont married his landlady's daughter, and they lived in " a genteel house in Islington ; " he always had plenty of money, but would not tell either his wife or her family anything of his trade or profession. One day, when Altamont had been drinking unwisely, he let slip a remark that roused his wife's suspicions ; and, after going round to consult with her mother, she drove next morning to the city and reconnoitred the neighbourhood of the Bank of England. " She walked before the Bank, and behind the Bank : she came home disperryted, having learned nothink." Then her mother took up the pursuit, and, heavily veiled, went day after day on Altamont's track, and at length returned in triumph, and called on her daughter to announce : " Now, my love, I have found him. Come with me tomorrow, and you shall know all ! " Mr. Yellowplush shall relate the sequel :

" The ladies nex morning set out for the City, and I walked behind, doing the genteel thing, with a nosegy and a goold stick. We walked down the New Road—we walked down the City Road—we walked to the Bank. We were crossing from that heddyfiz to the other side of Cornhill, when all of a sudden missis shreeked, and fainted spontaceously away. I rushed forrard, and raised her in my arms, spiling thereby a new

weskit and a pair of crimson smalcloes. I rushed forrard, I say, very nearly knocking down the old sweeper who was hobbling away as fast as posibl. We took her to Birch's; we provided her with a hackney coach and every lucksury, and carried her home to Islington."

In a word—as Mr. Yellowplush shudders to relate, after he has explained how, some days later, a reconciliation came about—" Mr. Haltamont swep the crossing from the Bank to Cornhill!" And if you have any doubts as to the truth of the story, walk a few doors up Cornhill and here to this day is Birch's—a unique little confectionery shop, with a low, small-paned window—one of the very few relics that Cornhill still retains of an age that is gone.

CHAPTER IV

UP AND DOWN THE CITY ROAD

COMING from the foot of Holborn along Newgate Street and Cheapside I have a pleasant feeling that we are walking over ground that Dickens has trodden many times before us. There is a *Sketch by Boz* in which he writes, "We had been lounging one evening down Oxford Street, Holborn, Cheapside, Finsbury Square, and so on," and somewhere off the City Road he dropped into "a modest public-house of the old school, with a little old bar, and a little old landlord," and he describes the company he found there in "The Parlour Orator." He tramped along the City Road as far as Pentonville; and before we continue on the main route I have mapped out for us, I want to branch off here, at the end of the Poultry, and make that same excursion that Dickens made. There are several points of interest to be noted by the way, but the chief end of our digression is to be that house mid-way up the City Road where Mr. Micawber lived, when David Copperfield was lodging with him.

Except for the Bank of England, which occupies all the eastern side of it, Prince's Street has been newly built and has no memories; but the first turning on the right, round by the back of the Bank, is Lothbury —so called, according to Stow, because it was, in his sixteenth century, the work-place of many copper

founders who, in the turning and polishing of their metal, made a noise that was peculiarly loathsome to the passer-by. A few paces up Lothbury is Tokenhouse Yard, which we must not leave unvisited. When Defoe's rascally young Colonel Jack had stolen a purse from an old gentleman near St. Swithin's Lane, just beyond the Mansion House, he "went directly forward into the broad place on the north side of the Exchange, then scoured down Bartholomew Lane, so into Tokenhouse Yard, into the alleys that pass through thence to London Wall, so through Moorgate, and sat down on the grass in the second of the quarters of Moorfields, towards the middle field." Here he waited till his associate, Will, joined him, and they found a rich paper of loose diamonds in the purse. Bartholomew Lane flanks the other side of the Bank, parallel with Prince's Street, and will bring you to the Exchange, and St. Swithin's Lane, whence Colonel Jack had come. Tokenhouse Yard is also the scene of a dreadful little picture in Defoe's *Journal of the Plague*:

"Passing through Tokenhouse Yard, in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful schreeces, and then cried, 'Oh! death, death, death!' in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another; so I went on to pass into Bell Alley."

The Tokenhouse Yard that the Plague reduced to such a state of desolation and helpless despair went down in the Great Fire, and most of it has been re-

built more than once since then; its importance centres to-day in its famous Auction Mart; but it still wears an old-world air and has subtle touches of age about it. A tunnel through the house at the inner end brings you into what used to be Bell Alley, where Defoe witnessed another harrowing incident of the Plague; and the narrow Alley takes you to Moorgate Street and, continuing across the road, runs into Coleman Street. Mr. Pickwick, you know, whilst he was staying at the George and Vulture, in George Yard, Lombard Street, was arrested for debt by a gentleman who presented a card inscribed: "Namby, Bell Alley, Coleman Street." He and his assistant, Smouch, carried Mr. Pickwick off in a coach to Coleman Street, and "the coach having turned into a very narrow and dark street, stopped before a house with iron bars to all the windows; the door-posts of which were graced by the name and title of 'Namby, Officer to the Sheriffs of London;' the inner gate having been opened by a gentleman who might have been a neglected twin-brother of Mr. Smouch, and who was endowed with a large key for the purpose, Mr. Pickwick was shown into the 'coffee-room.'" When I first knew the Alley, there was a house on the south side, near the Coleman Street end, that had bars across its windows, and I accepted it unhesitatingly as Namby's; but nothing remains of it now; all that side of the Alley is taken up by the blind side walls of monster buildings that have their doors in Moorgate and in Coleman Streets.

In the days of the Commonwealth Coleman Street was a hotbed of Puritanism; Cowley used it as a background for his comedy, "Cutter of Coleman

Street;" but it had acquired that reputation much earlier: when James I. was King, and when Ben Jonson's Justice Clement had his house in the Street, for you find Mistress Chremylus, in Randolph's *Hey for Honesty*, protesting: "I'll be sworn the lay clergy, while they were a-preaching at Bell Alley and Coleman Street, I came by with my basket: the hungry rascals in pure zeal had like to eat up my gingerbread, had there not been Popish pictures upon it. I had much ado to keep them from scrambling my apples too, had not the sets of my old ruff looked like so many organ pipes and frightened them!" If you have read Trollope's *Prime Minister* you may remember that in Coleman Street were the offices of that notable Mining Company in which the cunning Lopez was so deeply interested, and the Street is largely made up of such-like offices to this day.

London Wall cuts off the northern end of Coleman Street; up London Wall to the left is the church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where Milton, and Chapman, the Elizabethan dramatist, are buried; a portion of the old Roman city wall is still standing in the churchyard. But go to the end of Coleman Street, and across Fore Street is Moorfields, to which we have already made some reference, and Moorfields takes you to Ropemaker Street, which was Ropemaker Alley when Defoe died in it. Here we are beyond the city wall, and hereabouts were those Moorfields that Colonel Jack frequented, and where Bobadil lived. Turn off to the right through Ropemaker Street and we are out on Finsbury Pavement, with Moorgate Street and the site of the old gateway in London Wall well behind us. But see

how difficult it is to make progress through a district so crowded with memories! The very next turning is Chiswell Street, and glancing along it you may see the corner of Bunhill Row, where Milton lived when he was writing "Paradise Lost;" where Dryden visited him; and where he died.

We will not go round that way, though, for Bunhill Row has been drearily altered, and would bring us back into the City Road through a neighbourhood that, as a citizen of London and a normal human creature, I can never traverse without being depressed by a sense of bewilderment and unspeakable shame. There are long streets between the Row and the City Road, a wide area of them, whence we have cleared away a squalid lot of little old houses and put up in their place mass after mass of gaunt and gloomy Workmen's Dwellings. There are whole streets full of these inhuman rookeries, these sanitary piggeries, and that a Christian people could have built such godless and debasing piles believing them fit for men and women to inhabit, for children to be born in and, with such an environment, reared to live decent and blameless lives, passes my comprehension. It passes my understanding, too, that any mortal man having a pleasant residence for himself, his wife and little ones, could in any way sanction the building of such grossly unsanctified barracks and think them good homes for other human souls, though he knows that in no circumstances would he consider them good enough for himself. Cheerless, hideous, gigantic structures they are, that even age and dirt, that make most other things picturesque, can only make more hideous and more

repellent. Each is squared about an asphalted courtyard that is too deeply shut-in for the sun to reach down to it, and in these barren squares you shall see swarms of little children playing, spindly, ragged little things, for the most part, bleached for want of the sun, thin and bloodless from insufficient feeding, and yet we thrill with pride when we tell each other that rich and poor in this favoured country are amenable to the same law, as if that were the very height of justice; whereas, if you reflect upon it, nothing could be more crudely and unintelligently unjust. There ought to be one law for the rich and another for the poor, and the law for the rich should be far the more stringent of the two. What right have we to expect the lives that are brought to maturity in those swarming, villainously ugly Workmen's Dwellings to be as honest, as cleanly, as moral as the lives that are nurtured in stately and beautiful country mansions or healthful houses of the suburbs? Certainly, if only of him to whom much is given shall much be required, we are not entitled to expect anything whatever of the poverty-smitten multitude that live in the dreary, desolate waste of Workmen's Dwellings that is shamefully hidden away behind the western side of the City Road.

By-and-by, we shall have to see more of such soul-blighting places as these, because some of Gissing's imaginary people happened to live in one of them; but for the moment we will keep out along the City Road and say no more of the deformities in its byways.

If this were a book about real people we should

"All Lambeth is thick with memories of Thyrza. Lydia and Thyrza lodged there in Walnut Tree Walk."

Chapter 8

have to go into Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, where Defoe is buried, and Bunyan, Blake, Richard Cromwell, Strudwick, the Snow Hill grocer in whose house Bunyan died, Wesley's mother, and many another whose memory still haunts these London streets. And facing Bunhill Fields is Wesley's Chapel, in the graveyard of which Wesley has his last resting place. But we are getting too entangled in realities, and have no proper business with anything until we come to the corner of Old Street, which opens left and right of us. To the right is that Hoxton (then Hogsden) where Ben Jonson's Master Knowell and his son lived; all about there was Hoxton Fields, to which there are so many references in *Every Man in His Humour*, and once in Hoxton Fields Ben Jonson fought a duel with Gabriel Spencer, the player, and killed him. Curtain Road is along there, commemorating the old Curtain Theatre with which Shakespeare was associated when he first came to London, and at the far end of Old Street is Shoreditch church, in whose churchyard lie some of the Curtain's famous actors, men who were friends of Shakespeare. And that same end of the street, which has Shoreditch station at one of its corners, has associations with Gissing's *Nether World*. If you go down there you will find two or three Italian pastrycooks' shops, any one of which may be the one in which Bob Hewett had a memorable conversation with Clem Peckover, of whom we shall see more in a later chapter. Clem had married the prodigal Joseph Snowden, and was anxious that Bob's wife, Penelope, otherwise Pennyloaf, should be on good terms

again with her husband's daughter by his first wife, because Jane Snowden was living with Joseph's father, at Hanover Street, Islington, and the old man was believed to have money.

"In Old Street, not far from Shoreditch Station, was a shabby little place of refreshment, kept by an Italian; pastry and sweet-stuff filled the window; at the back of the shop, through a doorway on each side of which was looped a pink curtain, a room, furnished with three marble-topped tables, invited those who wished to eat and drink more at ease than was possible before the counter. Except on Sunday evening this room was very little used, and there, on the occasion of which I speak, Clem was sitting with Bob Hewett. They had been having supper together—French pastry and a cup of cocoa.

"She leaned forward on her elbows, and said imperatively, 'Tell Pennyloaf to make it up with her again.'

"'Why?'

"'Because I want to know what goes on in Hanover Street. You was a fool to send her away, and you'd ought to have told me about it before now. If they was such friends, I suppose the girl told her lots o' things. But I expect they see each other just the same. You don't suppose she does all *you* tell her?'

"'I'll bet you what you like she does!' cried Bob.

"Clem glared at him.

"'Oh, you an' your Pennyloaf! Likely she tells you the truth. You're so fond of each other, ain't you! Tells you everything, does she?—the way you treat her!'

"'Who's always at me to treat her worse still?' Bob retorted half angrily, half in expostulation.

"'Well, and so I am, 'cause I hate the name of her! I'd like to hear as you starve her and her brats half to death. How much money did you give her last week? Now just you tell me the truth. How much was it?'

"'How can I remember? Three or four bob, I s'pose.'

"'Three or four bob!' she repeated, snarling. 'Give her

one, and make her live all the week on it. Wear her down! Make her pawn all she has, and go cold!'

"Her cheeks were on fire; her eyes started in the fury of jealousy; she set her teeth together.

"'I'd better do for her altogether,' Bob said, with an evil grin.

"Clem looked at him, without speaking; kept her gaze on him; then said in a thick voice:

"'There's many a true word spoke in joke.'

"Bob moved uncomfortably. There was a brief silence, then the other, putting her face nearer his:

"'Not just yet. I want to use her to get all I can about that girl and her old beast of a grandfather.' . . .

"There came nosies from the shop. Three work-girls had just entered and were buying cakes, which they began to eat at the counter. They were loud in gossip and laughter, and their voices rang like brass against brass. . . .

"'What do you expect to know from that girl?' inquired Bob.

"'Lots o' things. I want to know what the old bloke's goin' to do with his money, don't I? And I want to know what my beast of a 'usband's got out of him. And I want to know what that feller Kirkwood's goin' to do.' . . .

"He shuffled with his feet, then rose.

"'Where can I see you on Wednesday morning?' asked Clem. 'I want to hear about that girl.'

"'It can't be Wednesday morning. I tell you I shall be getting the sack next thing; they've promised it. Two days last week I wasn't at the shop, and one day this. It can't go on.'

"His companion retorted angrily, and for five minutes they stood in embittered colloquy. It ended in Bob's turning away and going out into the street. Clem followed, and they walked westwards in silence. Reaching City Road, and crossing to the corner where lowers St. Luke's Hospital—grim abode of the insane, here in the midst of London's squalor and uproar—they halted to take leave. The last words they exchanged, after making an appointment, were of brutal violence."

We are at the corner where Clem and Bob Hewett parted, by the asylum of St. Luke's. Another two minutes' walk up the City Road and we reach Shepherdess Walk, with the Eagle Tavern at its corner, and adjoining it the Salvation Army premises that used to be the old Grecian Theatre. In its prime the Eagle was a great place of entertainment, a sort of Vauxhall Gardens on an inferior scale. It is immortalised in the nonsensical old catch:

Up and down the City Road,
In and out the Eagle,
That's the way the money goes,
Pop goes the weasel!

and in "Miss Evans and the Eagle," which, you may remember, in the *Sketches by Boz*. Miss Evans lived with her parents at Camden Town, and the little journeyman carpenter, Mr. Samuel Wilkins, who was deeply in love with her, called at the house "one Monday afternoon in his best attire, with his face more shining and his waistcoat more bright than either had ever appeared before. The family were just going to tea, and were *so* glad to see him." He had brought a pint of shrimps with him "to propitiate Mrs. Ivins," and sat down chatting affably while the two youngest Miss Ivinses made the kettle boil, Jemima being upstairs "cleaning herself":

"'I vos a thinking,' said Mr. Samuel Wilkins, during a pause in the conversation—'I vos a thinking of taking J'mima to the Eagle to-night.'—'O my!' exclaimed Mrs. Ivins. 'Lor! how nice!' said the youngest Miss Ivins. 'Well, I declare!' added the youngest Miss Ivins but one. 'Tell J'mima to put on her white muslin, Tilly,' screamed Mrs. Ivins, with motherly anxiety; and down came J'mima herself soon afterwards in a white muslin gown carefully hooked and eyed, and a little

red shawl, plentifully pinned, and white straw bonnet trimmed with red ribbons, and a small necklace, and large pair of bracelets, and Denmark satin shoes, and open-worked stockings, white cotton gloves on her fingers, and a cambric pocket-handkerchief, carefully folded up, in her hand—all quite genteel and ladylike. And away went Miss J'mima Ivins and Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and a dress cane with a gilt knob at the top, to the admiration and envy of the street in general, and to the high gratification of Mrs. Ivins and the two youngest Miss Ivinses in particular. They had no sooner turned into the Pancras Road than who should Miss J'mima Ivins stumble upon by the most fortunate accident in the world but a young lady as she knew, with *her* young man; and it is so strange how things do turn out sometimes—they were actually going to the Eagle too. So Mr. Samuel Wilkins was introduced to Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, and they all walked on together, talking, and laughing, and joking away like anything; and when they got as far as Pentonville, Miss Ivins's friend's young man would have the ladies go into the Crown to taste some shrub, which, after a great blushing and giggling, and hiding of faces in elaborate pocket-handkerchiefs, they consented to do. Having tasted it once, they were easily prevailed upon to taste it again; and they sat out in the garden tasting shrub and looking at the busses alternately, till it was just the proper time to go to the Eagle; and then they resumed their journey, and walked very fast, for fear they should lose the beginning of the concert in the Rotunda. 'How ev'nly!' said Miss J'mima Ivins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend, both at once, when they passed the gate and were fairly inside the gardens. There were the walks beautifully gravelled and planted, and the refreshment boxes painted and ornamented like so many snuff-boxes, and the variegated lamps shedding their rich light upon the company's heads, and the place for dancing ready chalked for the company's feet, and a Moorish band playing at one end of the gardens and an opposition military band playing away at the other."

Everything went well until a gentleman with

large whiskers persisted in staring at Miss J'mima Ivins, and a gentleman in a plaid waistcoat flattered her friend with similar attentions. Well, the Eagle has gone and a new tavern has risen on its ashes, but here is the ground upon which Mr. Samuel Wilkins and Miss Ivins's friend's young man came out, very much damaged, after a furious affray with those two intrusive strangers, to carry their hysterical and remorseful ladies home in a hackney coach.

Two or three minutes beyond Shepherdess Walk, and we are at Windsor Terrace. Now, the City Road is the shabbiest, the most carelessly untidy of all the great highways into London. The best of its shops are dully or garishly respectable; the worst of them have a dusty, littered, hugger-mugger, neglected look that would disgrace a back alley in the East End. The northern part of the Road is made up of dingy, tired-looking private houses, with dingy, depressed gardens in front of them—houses that look as if they had once been rural and belonged to a country town, but had come to London and been so long in it that they have grown haggard, sophisticated, disheartened. At one point the road is patched together with a dowdy canal bridge, over whose parapets you see a dirty, sluggish canal, its banks strewn with piles of coal and high, unsightly stacks of timber. If there is any more grubby, slovenly, slatternly highway into London than this I have never trodden it. Yet Windsor Terrace alone clothes it in glory, and I should be grieved to see it cleaned or tidied or improved in any way, simply because, as it is, it is Windsor Terrace's fit and proper environment. There have been changes

in it, but not enough, I am thankful to say, to spoil its mid-Victorian aspect; it is still very much what it was when Micawber went up and down it, to and from his home here; and of all the great humorous characters who live in the world's fiction there are only two greater than he, Falstaff being one and Don Quixote the other.

Windsor Terrace is a high, drab street shaped like a funnel. The outer, crescent-shaped portions, with some half dozen houses in each, slope back from the City Road, and the open space thus left before the long, narrow channel of the rest of the street looks as if it should have been a sort of village green, but it is all paved over, and there is a lamp-post in the centre, two lamp-posts on each side, and dwarf iron pillars round about it instead of trees. Micawber lived in the wide part of the funnel, in one of these six houses on the city side of it: you know that as soon as you set eyes on them, for they are exactly in keeping with all we know of him, and so subtly answer to all the hints Dickens gives of the characteristics of his residence. They are tall, plain, shabby-genteel houses, with railed-in areas before their basement windows and steps up to their front doors. When David Copperfield arrived at the blacking factory in Blackfriars Road, where he was to work with Mealy Potatoes and the other boys at labelling bottles, he was informed by the manager, Mr. Quinion, that his step-father had arranged for him to lodge with Mr. Micawber, and Mr. Micawber called during the morning to be introduced to his small lodger:

"'My address,' said Mr. Micawber, 'is Windsor Terrace,

City Road. I—in short,' said Mr. Micawber, with the same genteel air, and in another burst of confidence—'I live there.'

"I made him a bow.

"'Under the impression,' said Mr. Micawber, 'that your peregrinations in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the arcana of the Modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road—in short,' said Mr. Micawber, in another burst of confidence, 'that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening, and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way.' . . .

"Mr. Quinion then formally engaged me to be as useful as I could in the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first and seven afterwards. He paid me a week down (from his own pocket, I believe), and I gave Mealy sixpence out of it to get my trunk carried to Windsor Terrace at night: it being too heavy for my strength, small as it was. I paid sixpence more for my dinner, which was a meat-pie and a turn at a neighbouring pump; and passed the hour which was allowed for that meal, in walking about the streets.

"At the appointed time in the evening, Mr. Micawber reappeared. I washed my hands and face, to do the greater honour to his gentility, and we walked to our house, as I suppose I must now call it, together; Mr. Micawber impressing the names of streets, and the shapes of corner houses upon me, as we went along, that I might find my way back easily in the morning.

"Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace (which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could), he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour (the first floor was altogether unfurnished, and the blinds were kept down to delude the neighbours), with a baby at her breast. This baby was one of twins; and I may remark here that I hardly ever, in all my experience of the family, saw both of the

twins detached from Mrs. Micawber at the same time. One of them was always taking refreshment. There were two other children; Master Micawber, aged about four, and Miss Micawber, aged about three. These, and a dark-complexioned young woman, with a habit of snorting, who was servant to the family and informed me before half-an-hour had expired that she was 'a Orfling,' and came from St Luke's workhouse in the neighbourhood, completed the establishment. My room was at the top of the house, at the back: a close chamber; stencilled all over with an ornament which my young imagination represented as a blue muffin; and very scantily furnished. . . .

"Poor Mrs. Micawber! She said she had tried to exert herself; and so, I have no doubt, she had. The centre of the street-door was perfectly covered with a great brass plate, on which was engraved 'Mrs. Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies:' but I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there; or that any young lady ever came, or proposed to come; or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of were creditors. *They* used to come at all hours, and some of them were quite ferocious. One dirty-faced man, I think he was a bootmaker, used to edge himself into the passage as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and call up the stairs to Mr. Micawber—'Come! You ain't out yet, you know. Pay us, will you? Don't hide, you know; that's mean. I wouldn't be mean if I was you. Pay us, will you? You just pay us, d'you hear? Come!' Receiving no answer to these taunts, he would mount in his wrath to the words 'swindlers' and 'robbers'; and these being ineffectual too, would sometimes go to the extremity of crossing the street and roaring up at the windows of the second floor, where he knew Mr. Micawber was. At these times, Mr. Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor; but within half an hour afterwards, he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever."

When Mr. Micawber's affairs reached such a crisis that there was neither food in the house here nor money to buy any, Mrs. Micawber took David Copperfield into her confidence and, though she refused to accept a small loan, hinted that there were other ways in which he might be of service:

"'I have parted with the plate myself,' said Mrs. Micawber. 'Six tea, two salt, and a pair of sugars I have at different times borrowed money on, in secret, with my own hands. But the twins are a great tie; and to me, with my recollections of papa and mama, these transactions are very painful. There are still a few trifles that we could part with. Mr. Micawber's feelings would never allow *him* to dispose of them; and Clickett'—this was the girl from the workhouse—'being of a vulgar mind, would take painful liberties if so much confidence was reposed in her. Master Copperfield, if I might ask you—'

"I understood Mrs. Micawber now, and begged her to make use of me to any extent. I began to dispose of the more portable articles of property that very evening; and went out on a similar expedition almost every morning, before I went to Murdstone and Grinby's. Mr. Micawber had a few books on a little chiffonier, which he called the library; and those went first. I carried them, one after another, to a bookstall in the City Road—one part of which, near our house, was almost all bookstalls and birdshops then—and sold them for whatever they would bring. The keeper of the bookstall who lived in a little house behind it, used to get tipsy every night, and to be violently scolded by his wife every morning. More than once, when I went there early, I had audience of him in a turn-up bedstead, with a cut in his forehead or a black eye, bearing witness to the excesses overnight (I am afraid he was quarrelsome in his drink), and he with a shaking hand endeavouring to find the needful shillings in one or other of the pockets of his clothes, which lay upon the floor, while his wife, with the baby in her arms and her shoes down at heel, never left off rating him. Sometimes he had lost his money, and then he would

ask me to call again ; but his wife had always got some—had taken his, I dare say, while he was drunk—and secretly completed the bargain on the stairs, as we went down together."

That part of the City Road, "near our house" which was "almost all bookstalls and birdshops," was the part that faces the end of Windsor Terrace. It remained so, with little alteration, down to a few years ago ; shabby little bookshops with a litter of stalls before their frontages ; and I bought books at some of the bookstalls not knowing that, long before, David Copperfield had been there to sell them. They have been wiped right out now, and a mammoth furniture repository has usurped their place, but adjacent to it is a row of shops that are curiously reminiscent of those that are gone. Seeing them from a little way off the other evening, after the gas was alight, I thought for a moment they were a few of the old shops that had escaped destruction, but a nearer view dispelled the illusion : they are new shops, larger than the old, with nothing of the snoozy quaintness of their predecessors, but there is a happy haphazard carelessness about the way in which the goods are just left lying about anyhow in their windows, and a general dusty, lounging air over them of waiting with your hands in your pockets for customers to drop in that is tantalisingly reminiscent of the older shops that David Copperfield knew. For, as I have said before and shall have occasion to say again, you cannot give a London street a new character by pulling it all down and giving it new houses. Sooner or later the old character subdues the new houses and asserts itself, generally with modifications, but not always.

Mr. Micawber's affairs came to such a pass that he was arrested for debt and conveyed to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough; the furniture of the house in Windsor Terrace was nearly all sold and for a while David, Mrs. Micawber, the children, and the Orfling "encamped, as it were, in the two parlours of the emptied house in Windsor Terrace," amid a small wreckage of bedding, chairs and a kitchen table. Then the family joined Mr. Micawber in the prison, and David, having taken the key of the house to the landlord, "who was very glad to get it," took a back garret over Southwark way, so as to be as near the Micawbers as possible.

If you pass from the funnel-mouth of Windsor Terrace into its narrow throat, you find the tall houses here all built to the same pattern as those we associate with Micawber, but standing so much nearer together they have a dingier, gloomier aspect, that is only slightly mitigated in the case of one or two which have ænemic, draggled creepers straggling over them. At the end of Windsor Terrace, turn off to the left, and a walk of five minutes, keeping straight on, will take you to the Hanover Street that Clem mentioned to Bob Hewett, where Jane Snowden was living with her grandfather. It is a quiet, out-of-the-way street of little houses which, except that three or four of them have been pulled down to make room for a County Council School, remains much as it was while Gissing was writing *The Nether World*. When old Mr. Snowden returned from abroad and found his grand-daughter, Jane, living in squalid, half-starved misery, the household drudge of Mrs. Peckover and Clem in Clerkenwell

Close, he arranged to take her away, and Sidney Kirkwood, who had always pitied and befriended Jane, set himself to find lodgings for them. There was no accommodation to be had for them in Tysoe Street, Clerkenwell, where he lived himself, so he went farther afield :

" He paid a visit the next evening to certain acquaintances of his named Byass, who had a house in Hanover Street, Islington, and let lodgings. Hanover Street lies to the north of City Road ; it is a quiet byway, of curving form, and consists of dwellings only. Squalor is here kept at arm's length ; compared with regions close at hand, this and the contiguous streets have something of a suburban aspect. Three or four steps led up to the house door. Sidney's knock summoned a young, healthy-faced, comely woman, who evinced a hearty pleasure at seeing who her visitor was. She brought him at once into a parlour on the ground floor.

" ' Well, an' as I was only this mornin' tellin' Sam to go and look after you, or write a note, or somethin' ! Why can't you come round oftener ? I've no patience with you ! You just sit at 'ome an' get humped, an' what's the good of that, I should like to know ? I thought you'd took offence with me, an' so I told Sam. Do you want to know how baby is ? Why don't you ask, then, as you ought to do the first thing ? He's a good deal better than he deserves to be, the young rascal—all the trouble he gives me ! He's fast asleep, I'm glad to say, so you can't see him. Sam'll be back in a few minutes ; at least I expect him, but there's no knowin' nowadays when he can leave the warehouse. What's brought you to-night, I wonder ? You needn't tell me anything about the Upper Street business. *I* know all about *that* ! '

" ' Oh, do you ? From Clara herself ? '

" ' Yes. Don't talk to me about her ! There ! I'm sick an' tired of her—an' so are you, I should think, if you've any sense left.' "

The Byasses are among the most natural as well

as the most humorous of Gissing's characters; humour being the rarest thing in his books. Sam Byass is a cheerful ass who is always doing and saying fatuously silly things under the impression that they are funny, his wife keenly appreciating his wit and encouraging it with shrieks of laughter. The cheap happiness of their lives and their foolish fondness of each other is as wonderfully realistic as the later stage of their career when they drift into misunderstanding and the grey tragedy of a separation. Mrs. Byass has rattled on a good deal about Clara Hewett, and Kirkwood's chequereed engagement to her, for some time before he can get a chance to touch on the object of his visit. Then, he remarks, "I see you've still got the card in the window. I shouldn't wonder if I could find you a lodger for those two top rooms." The outcome of his negotiations is that Jane and her grandfather duly move into the two top rooms here, which must have been the attics, for the houses have otherwise only basements, and ground and first floors, and on one occasion you have Jane standing at the front door to watch the Byasses going forth on a short holiday:

"Then she went upstairs. On the first floor the doors of the two rooms stood open, and the rooms were bare. The lodgers who had occupied this part of the house had recently left; a card was again hanging in the window of Bessie's parlour. Jane passed up the succeeding flight and entered the chamber that looked out upon Hanover Street."

Her grandfather sat smoking his pipe at the open window; and "but for the cry of a milkman or a paper-boy in the street, no sound broke the quietness of the summer morning." Thereafter, Sidney

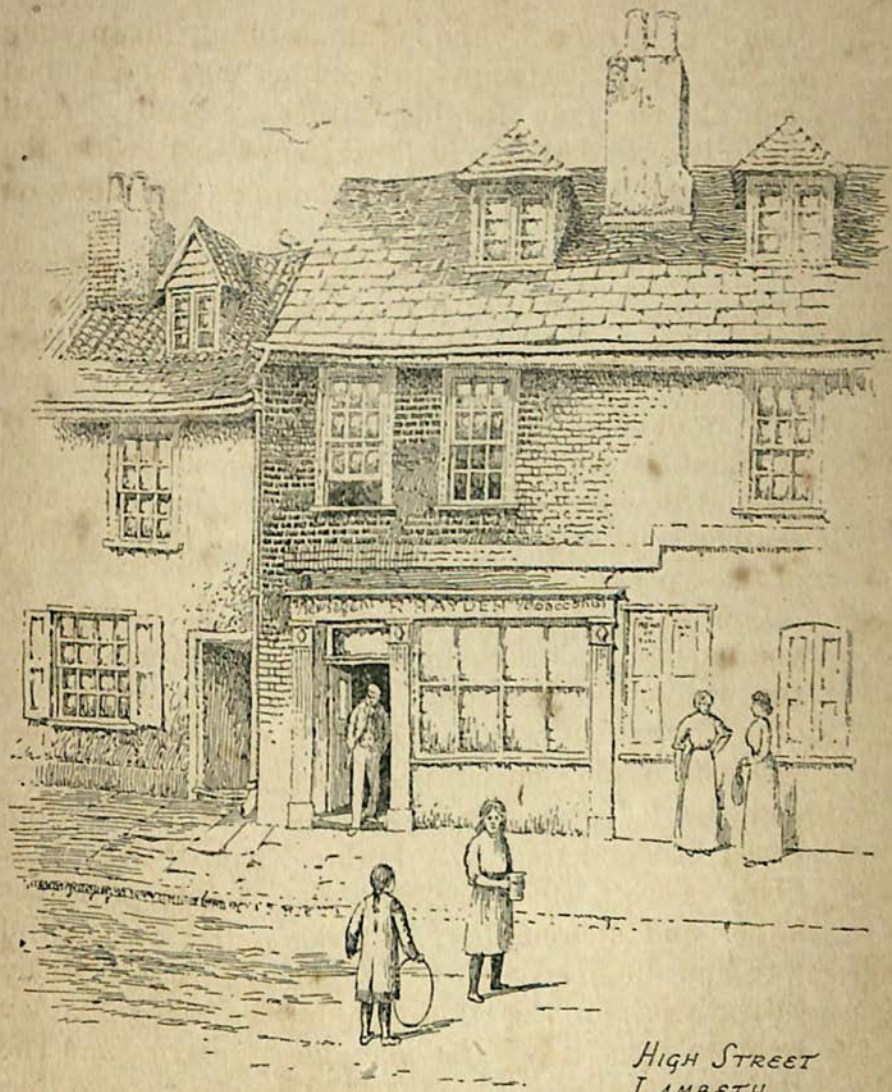
Kirkwood came often to the house and he and Jane, almost before they were aware of it, drifted into love with each other, but there was to be no happy ending to their pleasant romance, for reasons which we shall have to touch upon later. Jane's shifty and unscrupulous father, Joseph, before and after he had married Clem Peckover, was also a frequent visitor, hypocritically scheming to win his daughter's affection and to ferret out the truth as to the supposed wealth of his father, and on at least one occasion he went "strolling away from Hanover Street in Sidney's company." There was a rainy evening when Sidney, after he realised that he was in love with Jane, and shrank from seeing her, partly because of her grandfather's supposed wealth, partly because of his lingering loyalty to Clara Hewett, was wandering about Islington in search of new rooms for himself and "found himself at the end of Hanover Street, and was drawn to the familiar house; not, however, to visit the Snowdens, but to redeem a promise recently made to Bessie Byass, who declared herself vastly indignant at the neglect with which he treated her. So, instead of going up the steps to the front door, he descended into the area." And there was a later day when, after old Snowden had died leaving no will and Joseph, who had come in for all the money, had deserted his wife and vanished, Clem provoked a furious scene with her ancient hag of a mother in Clerkenwell Close, and finished it by rushing impetuously, "out of Clerkenwell Close, up St. John Street Road, across City Road, down to Hanover Street, literally running for most of the time. Her knock at Mrs. Byass's

door was terrific." She went storming in, in spite of Mrs. Byass's attempts to keep her out, and bullied and abused Jane for her father's rascality, until Mrs. Byass desperately threatened her with the police, and got her out and slammed the door on her.

If you loiter along the street and think of these things you can hardly believe that they did not all happen here; that these stones have not been trodden by the men and women who seem so real to you and whom the book makes you so intimately acquainted with. Gissing himself must have been up and down it many times, but you are not more acutely conscious of his presence here than of that of those people of his imagination.

Continuing along Hanover Street, and Noel Street, you emerge upon Colebrook Row, and if you follow the winding of the Row, past the little white box of a cottage in which Charles Lamb used to live, you will find yourself in Upper Street, Islington, and the "Upper Street business" to which Mrs. Byass has referred was nothing worse than that Clara Hewett, tired of living penuriously with her father and step-mother, had taken her own wilful way and obtained a situation as waitress in a flashy eating-house in this thoroughfare, and here Sidney went to meet her. The place was known as "The Imperial Restaurant and Luncheon Bar," and has its counterpart in Upper Street to-day.

"The front shone with vermilion paint; the interior was aflare with many gas-jets; in the window was disposed a tempting exhibition of 'snacks' of fish, cold roast fowls, ham-sandwiches, and the like; whilst farther back stood a cooking-



HIGH STREET
LAMBETH
Fred^k Adcock.

"Mr. Egremont, benevolently inspired, opened a lecture hall in a room over a saddler's shop in High Street, Lambeth."

Chapter 8

stove, whereon frizzled and vapoured a savoury mess of sausages and onions. Sidney turned away a few paces. The inclemency of the night made Upper Street—the promenade of a great district on account of its spacious pavement—less frequented than usual; but there were still numbers of people about, some hastening homewards, some sauntering hither and thither in the familiar way, some gathered into gossiping groups. Kirkwood was irritated by the conversation and laughter that fell on his ears, irritated by the distant strains of the band, irritated above all by the fume of frying that pervaded the air for many yards about Mrs. Tubbs's precincts. He observed that the customers tending that way were numerous. They consisted mainly of lads and young men who had come forth from neighbouring places of entertainment. The locality and its characteristics had been familiar to him from youth upwards; but his nature was not subdued to what it worked in, and the present fit of disgust was only an accentuation of a mood by which he was often posesssed."

Clara came out, at last, and they went up the street together and "crossed by the 'Angel' and entered St. John Street Road," making for Clerkenwell Close.

Mr. Micawber would never have walked from Blackfriars Road to Windsor Terrace nowadays; nor would Miss Evans and Mr. Samuel Wilkins have walked all the way from Camden Town to the Eagle; we are pampered in the matter of travelling accommodation and have lost the pedestrian habit; so we will take a tram from the Angel, which was one of the old coaching inns, but has been many times rebuilt, to Finsbury Pavement, and thence get back to the Bank, from which we started on our northern pilgrimage.

CHAPTER V

MR. PICKWICK, LIZZIE HEXAM, AND SOME OTHERS

WHEN Mr. Cheeryble discovered Nicholas Nickleby studying the advertisements in a Registry Office window and learned that he was in search of employment, he brought him from Oxford Street to the Bank in a bus and took him to the warehouse of Cheeryble Brothers, which was situated in "a quiet shady little square," somewhere "along Threadneedle Street and through some lanes and passages to the right." I have never been able to identify that square, nor, I confess, have I ever been able to find two such heavenly men of business as the Cheerybles. In Threadneedle Street were the banking premises of that very different pair of brothers, Sir Brian and Hobson Newcome, and thither went Colonel Newcome to visit them, on his return after long absence abroad. It was in Threadneedle Street, too, that Gissing's swaggering Mr. Gammon, of *The Town Traveller*, walking from Norton Folgate towards the Bank, was overtaken on a memorable occasion by the mysterious Mr. Greenacre, and they retired, for purposes of conversation, to the Bilboes, a snug place of refreshment "lurking in an obscure byway between the Bank and St. Paul's." And just beyond the other end of Threadneedle Street, in New Broad Street, is Austin

Friars where, as you know if you have read *Martin Chuzzlewit,* John Westlock and Tom Pinch called at the office of Mr. Fips who had intimated that he was prepared to offer Tom, whom Mr. Pecksniff had recently discharged, an uncommonly pleasant situation.

But there is more of interest up this other side of the Royal Exchange; let us follow in the footsteps of Lucy Snowe, from Charlottë Bronte's *Vilette,* when she came out that March morning, on her first visit to London, came out full of eager excitement and "saw and felt London at last. . . . I went up Cornhill; I mixed with the life passing along; I dared the peril of crossings. . . . Since those days I have seen the West End, the parks, the fine squares; but I love the City far better. The City seems so much more in earnest; its business, its rush, its roar, are such serious things, sights, sounds." I, too, love the City better than the West End, not for Lucy Snowe's reasons, but only, I think, because I have passed more of my days thereabouts and am more familiar with it.

It is curious how, in much miscellaneous reading, one comes upon unimportant passages that for no reason at all, or merely because they happen to have flashed vivid pictures upon the mind, one readily recalls, whilst many others that are worthier of remembrance have been as easily forgotten. If I begin to cast about now for what memories I have of Cornhill, almost the first that I recapture is a vision of the street in early Stuart times, when it was made up of picturesque gabled buildings and goldsmiths and wealthy merchants lived over their shops and warehouses in it, and when the City train

band, out for periodical exercise, marched past in the roadway in all its military bravery, watched by bright eyes from windows and doors. And this simply because of the advice that Meercraft gives to Gilthead, the goldsmith, as to the career he should choose for his son, in Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*:

Gilthead. But now I had rather get him a good wife
And plant him in the country, there to use
The blessing I shall leave him.
Meercraft. Out upon't!
And lose the laudable means thou hast at home here
To advance and make him a young alderman?
Buy him a captain's place, for shame; and let him
Into the world early, and with his plume
And scarfs march through Cheapside, or along Cornhill
And by the virtue of those, draw down a wife
There from a window worth ten thousand pound!

Or because of a strangely clear recollection I have of Sybil, the sprightly maid to Mistress Rose, daughter of Sir Roger Oatley, Lord Mayor of London, in Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, and of how when Sybil goes to join her mistress, who is staying with friends at Old Ford, Rose asks whether she has seen young Lacy, the gallant she loves, but who is cold to her, and whether he sent "kind greetings to his love," and the maid answers that she had only seen him one day stalk past with his soldiers:

"O yes, out of cry, by my troth. I scarce knew him; here 'a wore a scarf; and here a scarf, here a bunch of feathers, and here precious stones and jewels, and a pair of garters—O, monstrous! like one of our yellow silk curtains at home here in Old Ford House here, in Master Bellymount's chamber. I stood at our door in Cornhill, looked at him, he at me, indeed,

spake to him, but he not to me, not a word. Marry go-up, thought I, with a wanion! He passed by me as proud—Marry, foh! you are grown humorous, thought I; and so shut the door, and in I came."

You can see the piquant face of the peering girl suddenly withdrawn as the disdainful lordling goes swaggering by, and it is the crisp snap of that door slamming that shatters our dream and wakes us to the fact that Sir Roger Oatley's shop is no longer visible on Cornhill.

"The 'Banks of Jordan' was a public-house in the city, which from its appearance did not seem to do a very thriving trade," writes Anthony Trollope, in *The Three Clerks*. "You enter the 'Banks of Jordan' by two folding doors in a corner of a very narrow alley behind the Exchange;" and thither came Charley Tudor to keep an appointment with Mr. M'Ruen. The narrow alley is there yet, connecting the open space at the back of the Exchange with Finch Lane; there is still a restaurant there, and moreover you enter it by two folding doors, but its name is nothing like "The Banks of Jordan." It is probably a legitimate successor to the one that Trollope knew; for where a public-house is pulled down in London, a new one generally rises from the ashes of the old.

Before we proceed up Cornhill: here, beside the Exchange, the pillory used to stand, and in the summer of 1703 Defoe stood in it, as punishment for having published his "Shortest Way with the Dissenters," but he was so popular with the mob that instead of pelting him with mud and dead cats they swarmed round to applaud and protect him from

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insult and injury. He was at that time living farther up Cornhill, in Freeman's Court, where he carried on business as a hosier; and rather more than a century later the famous letter from Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, announcing that they had been instructed by Mrs. Martha Bardell to commence an action for breach of promise of marriage against Mr. Samuel Pickwick, was dated from their offices, "Freeman's Court, Cornhill, August 28th, 1827." And you may picture Mr. Pickwick, with that letter in his pocket, striding indignantly up Cornhill, with Sam Weller, to that furious interview with Messrs. Dodson and Fogg which ended in Sam's desperately intervening and, without ceremony, hauling his master down the stairs, and down the court, "and having safely deposited him in Cornhill, fell behind, prepared to follow whithersoever he should lead. Mr. Pickwick walked on abstractedly, crossed opposite the Mansion House, and bent his steps up Cheapside;" on his road to Gray's Inn to see his own lawyer, Mr. Perker. I am sorry that Freeman's Court was demolished over sixty years ago, but I have a conviction that if you explore Newman's Court you will see almost exactly what it looked like.

In Birchin Lane Macaulay lived when he was a child; and the poet Gray was born in a house that stood two doors this side of St. Michael's Alley. A little beyond the Alley, is St. Peter's Church, said to be the oldest Christian Church in London. It was founded, according to the inscription on an ancient tablet preserved in the vestry, in the year One hundred and ninety-seven. You must come here of an evening, when, as Henry S. Leigh has it,

Temples of Mammon are voiceless again—
Lonely policemen inherit Mark Lane;
Silent is Lothbury—quiet Cornhill—
Babel of Commerce, thine echoes are still;

if you would see the street as Bradley Headstone and Charley and Lizzie Hexam saw it on the occasion of their meeting when Lizzie was returning from one of her business visits to the gentle Jew, Riah, at the premises of Messrs. Pubsey and Co., in St. Mary Axe, Leadenhall Street. Her brother and Bradley Headstone lingered waiting for her here in Gracechurch Street, where Cornhill ends and Leadenhall Street begins. In Gracechurch Street is one entrance to St. Peter's Alley, which makes two sides of a square round the walled-in churchyard at the back of the Church and comes out again into Cornhill; and in this same St. Peter's Alley was enacted one of the most memorable scenes of *Our Mutual Friend*:

"A grey dusty withered evening in London city has not a hopeful aspect. The closed warehouses and offices have an air of death about them, and the national dread of colour has an air of mourning. The towers and steeples of the many house-encompassed churches, dark and dingy as the sky that seems descending on them, are no relief to the general gloom. . . . On such an evening, when the City grit gets into the hair and eyes and skin, and when the fallen leaves of the few unhappy City trees grind down in corners under wheels of wind, the schoolmaster and the pupil emerged upon the Leadenhall Street region, spying eastward for Lizzie. Being something too soon in their arrival, they lurked at a corner, waiting for her to appear. The best-looking among us will not look well lurking at a corner, and Bradley came out of that disadvantage very poorly indeed.

"'Here she comes, Mr. Headstone! Let us go forward and meet her.'

"As they advanced she saw them coming, and seemed rather troubled. But she greeted her brother with the usual warmth, and touched the extended hand of Bradley.

"'Why, where are you going, Charley, dear?' she asked him then.

"'Nowhere. We came on purpose to meet you.'

"'To meet me, Charley?'

"'Yes. We are going to walk with you. But don't let us take the great leading streets where everyone walks, and we can't hear ourselves speak. Let us go by the quiet backways. Here's a large paved court by this church, and quiet, too. Let us go up here.'

"'But it's not in the way, Charley.'

"'Yes it is,' said the boy, petulantly. 'It's in my way, and my way is yours.'

"She had not released his hand, and, still holding it, looked at him with a kind of appeal. He avoided her eyes under pretence of saying, 'Come along, Mr. Headstone.' Bradley walked at his side—not at hers—and the brother and sister walked hand in hand. The court brought them to a churchyard; a paved square court, with a raised bank of earth about breast-high, in the middle, enclosed by iron rails. Here, conveniently and healthfully elevated above the level of the living, were the dead, and the tombstones; some of the latter droopingly inclined from the perpendicular, as if they were ashamed of the lies they told. They paced the whole of this place once, in a constrained and uncomfortable manner, when the boy stopped and said:

"'Lizzie, Mr. Headstone has something to say to you.'"

In spite of her appeal, he breaks away and leaves her alone with the schoolmaster, and hesitantly, apologetically, tumultuously Bradley Headstone tries to give utterance to his passion for her, and tells how his love for her and her dislike of him is ruining all his life.

"Struggling with himself, and by times looking up at the

deserted windows of the houses as if there could be anything written in their grimy panes that would help him, he paced the whole pavement at her side, before he spoke again.

"'I must try to give expression to what is in my mind; it shall and must be spoken. Though you see me so confounded —though you strike me so helpless—I ask you to believe that there are many people who think well of me; that there are some people who highly esteem me; that I have in my way won a station which is considered worth winning.'

"'Surely, Mr. Headstone, I do believe it. Surely I have always known it from Charley.'

"'I ask you to believe that if I were to offer my home such as it is, my station such as it is, my affections such as they are, to any one of the best considered and best qualified and most distinguished among the young women engaged in my calling, they would probably be accepted. Even readily accepted. . . . I have sometimes had it in my thoughts to make that offer and to settle down as many men of my class do: I on the one side of the school, my wife on the other, both of us interested in the same work.'

"'Why have you not done so?' asked Lizzie. 'Why do you not do so?'

"'Far better that I never did! The only one grain of comfort I have had these many weeks,' he said, always speaking passionately and, when most emphatic, repeating that former action of his hands, which was like flinging his heart's blood down before her in drops upon the pavement-stones; 'the only grain of comfort I have had these many weeks is, that I never did. For if I had, and if the same spell had come upon me for my ruin, I know I should have broken that tie asunder as if it had been thread.'

"She glanced at him with a glance of fear, and a shrinking gesture. He answered, as if she had spoken.

"'No! It would not have been voluntary on my part, any more than it is voluntary in me to be here now. You draw me to you. If I were shut up in a strong prison, you would draw me out. I should break through the wall to come to you.

If I were lying on a sick bed, you would draw me up—to stagger to your feet and fall there.'

"The wild energy of the man, now quite let loose, was absolutely terrible. He stooped and laid his hand upon a piece of the coping of the burial-ground enclosure, as if he would have dislodged the stone.

"'No man knows till the time comes, what depths are within him. To some men it never comes; let them rest and be thankful! To me, you brought it; on me, you forced it; and the bottom of this raging sea,' striking himself upon the breast, 'has been heaved up ever since.'

"'Mr. Headstone, I have heard enough. Let me stop you here. It will be better for you and better for me. Let us find my brother.'

"'Not yet. It shall and must be spoken. . . . Here is a man lighting the lamps. He will be gone directly. I entreat of you to let us walk round this place again. You have no reason to look alarmed; I can restrain myself, and I will.'

"She yielded to the entreaty—how could she do otherwise?—and they paced the stones in silence. One by one the lights leaped up, making the cold grey church tower more remote, and then they were alone again. He said no more until they had regained the spot where he had broken off; there, he again stood still, and again grasped the stone. In saying what he said then, he never looked at her; but looked at it and wrenched at it.

"'You know what I am going to say. I love you. What other men may mean when they use that expression, I cannot tell; what *I* mean is, that I am under the influence of some tremendous attraction which I have resisted in vain, and which overmasters me. You could draw me to fire, you could draw me to water, you could draw me to the gallows, you could draw me to any death, you could draw me to anything I have most avoided, you could draw me to any exposure and disgrace . . . you could draw me to any good—every good—with equal force. . . . I only add that if it is any claim on you to be in earnest, I am in thorough earnest, dreadful earnest.'"

She tells him as gently as may be that she has no love for him, and that there is no hope of any change coming over her feelings towards him.

"'Then,' said he, suddenly changing his tone and turning to her, and bringing his clenched hand down upon the stone with a force that laid the knuckles raw and bleeding; 'then I hope that I may never kill him!' The dark look of hatred and revenge with which the words broke from his livid lips, and with which he stood holding out his smeared hand as if it held some weapon and had just struck a mortal blow, made her so afraid of him that she turned to run away. But he caught her by the arm.

"'Mr. Headstone, let me go. Mr. Headstone, I must call for help!'

"'It is I who should call for help,' he said; 'you don't know yet how much I need it.'"

He controls himself, and she listens whilst he bares his heart and discloses his consuming jealousy of the genial, careless, shiftless Eugene Wrayburn, the dilletante barrister who has been paying her so much attention of late, and whilst she is trying to check or answer his wild talk, her brother saunters into view and she runs to him. Then Bradley Headstone gives in, and goes, saying enough to let his pupil know he has been rejected. Follows another scene in which Charley Hexam bullies and abuses his sister, and since she will not yield to his entreaties and insistence that she should study his interests, as she always has done before, and marry the schoolmaster, he renounces her for ever, in a blind fury, and leaves her in the gloomy Alley alone. As she stands there, with her face laid in her hands on the stone coping, Riah, the Jew, passes, speaks to her, recognises her and hearing what has happened,

comforts her and sets out to walk home with her, but as they emerge into the main thoroughfare, they come upon Eugene Wrayburn, "loitering discontentedly by, and looking up the street, and down it, and all about." He had come to walk home with her, "having dined at a coffee-house in this neighbourhood and knowing your hour;" and though both Lizzie and old Riah discourage him from doing so, he gaily accompanies them as far as to Lizzie's lodgings, near Smith Square, Westminster.

Haunted by the memory of that tensely dramatic scene, and by those five human figures, so vividly alive, though they never really lived, St. Peter's Alley is to me one of the most glamorous spots in London. Its churchyard wall, and some of its houses have been rebuilt or restored, but you feel still, if you pass round it after the lamps are lighted, that it is the exactly right setting for the poignant incident that Dickens placed there.

We will not go into Leadenhall Street; there is nothing there now that we need go out of our way to see. When I was a boy (it is strange that I am not yet used to the feeling that I am old enough to talk in this fashion) only a few doors up on the left of Leadenhall Street was a nautical instrument-maker's shop; a squat, old-fashioned shop, its small-paned windows full of glitteringly bright brass and glass articles connected with the seafaring life; and projecting from the doorpost, just above reach of one's head, was the painted wooden figure of a little midshipman who was for ever examining the opposite side of the road through what I believe is technically known as a sextant. I had read

Dombey and Son, and knew this was the shop of old Sol Gills, and I could never get by it without stopping to peer in at the bewildering collection of unfamiliar objects on show in the window. I often thought of making an excuse to go in, but never had the courage to do it. So far as I could see, glancing in at the door, the interior was precisely as Dickens describes it, and when you remember that not merely Sol Gills, but Captain Cuttle, and that remarkable person Captain Bunsby, Mr. Toots and the Game Chicken, Walter Gay, Florence Dombey, Susan Nipper, Rob the Grinder, and Brogley (the second-hand furniture dealer, of Bishopsgate Street Without, who was put in as a man-in-possession) all came and went to and from that shop, and several of them lived, from time to time, in the rooms over it, you may guess what a place of magic it was to me, and what a sacrilege it seemed to pull such a house down and rear a common, inglorious building in its place. I once made a special journey round to the Minories to see the little wooden midshipman outside the new shop there to which he had been transferred, but he looked so lost and desolate, so shorn of his happy past that I took no pleasure in seeing him; and now he is gone from there also, and I have lost track of him.

And it is no use going as far up Leadenhall Street as St. Mary Axe to discover the house in which Fascinating Fledgby carried on his money-lending business with that idyllic old Jew Riah to manage it, for with the exception of some half dozen houses at the Houndsditch end of the street all St. Mary Axe is new. There

was a day when Sir Barnes Newcome, having got through with certain business at his bank in Threadneedle Street, "had occasion to go on 'Change, or elsewhere, to confer with brother capitalists, and in Cornhill behold he meets his uncle, Colonel Newcome, riding towards the India House, a groom behind him." But the India House, where Charles Lamb was a clerk, is no longer left in Leadenhall Street; the East India Chambers on the right of the street occupy the site of it.

It is worth while, however, taking a stroll through Leadenhall Market, which you may enter either from Leadenhall or from Gracechurch Street, for here Tim Linkinwater, the Cheeryble Brothers' managing clerk, used to do his shopping, and boasted that he could "buy new-laid eggs in Leadenhall Market any morning before breakfast;" and it was to the Blue Boar tavern (which you will search for in vain) in Leadenhall Market that Sam Weller went to keep an appointment with his father, and in the parlour of that hostelry he wrote the valentine to Mary, the housemaid, of which the elder Weller so profoundly disapproved, and there again that Sam vainly poured cold water on his father's suggestion that he should bring forward friends of his own at the trial of "Bardell *v.* Pickwick" in order to "prove a alleybi," and win the case.

Early in the fifteenth century, Sir Symon Eyre, a draper, and Lord Mayor of London, built at his own expense at the corner of Leadenhall and Gracechurch Streets, a hall that was to be used "as a public granary for laying up corn against a time of scarcity." Dekker, over a century afterwards, used

the fact in his comedy, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*: he makes Simon Eyre an eccentric shoemaker, living in Tower Street, and after he becomes Lord Mayor he builds the hall and entertains the King and a great company including his own workpeople. "Let's march together," says Firk, one of his men, to the others, "for the honour of St. Hugh to the great new Hall in Gracious Street corner, which our master, the new Lord Mayor, hath built;" and after the banquet, the King greets him with,

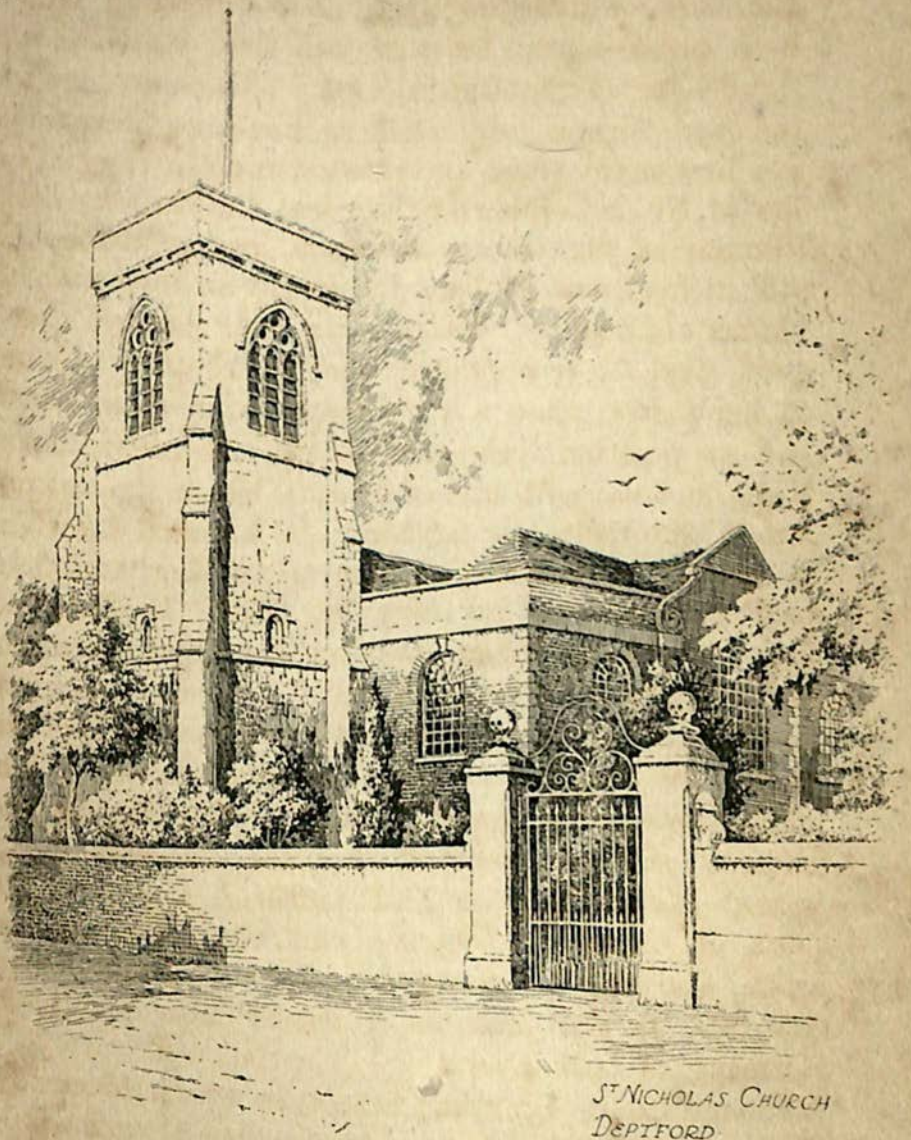
> Nay, my mad Lord Mayor, that shall be thy name;
> If any grace of mine can length thy life,
> One honour more I'll do thee: that new building,
> Which at thy cost in Cornhill is erected,
> Shall take a name from us—we'll have it called
> The Leadenhall, because in digging it
> You found the lead that covereth the same.

Who cares how much of that is true? I like this corner of Leadenhall Street because of its association with Dekker and his characters; because his imagination played about it, and he saw it in his fancy with all his characters thronging along these streets and filtering into the new hall that grew old and passed away, yet is still here in its place, one of those imperishable dream-houses of London that our writers of books have built for us and tenanted with dream-people.

Nowhere is the spirit of Dickens so all-pervading as it is hereabouts in the very heart of the City. He tells you, in his little sketch, "Bill-Sticking," it was when he was "on Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange," that he saw a solemn procession of three advertising vans, and looking into one of

the vans, whilst the driver was refreshing himself in a public-house, he saw and held converse with "the King of the Bill-Stickers." Go round, and up the next turning, and Dickens has been there before you how many times and in what tumults of emotion! For at No. 2 Lombard Street was the banking establishment of Mr. George Beadnell, and whilst he was still in his teens Dickens fell madly in love with the banker's daughter, Maria. She was pretty, and a good deal of a coquette, and her father objected to her suitor, than a very young man of no means and no position. He used to get his friend, Henry Kolle, in love with one of Maria's sisters, to smuggle letters into the house for him; he haunted the street in agonies of despair, seeking to see her, and later told Forster how his love for Maria Beadnell for four years excluded every other idea from his mind, and inspired him to work with a fierce determination that "lifted me up into newspaper life and floated me away over a hundred men's heads." The romance ended; Maria married a Mr. Winter, and Dickens saw no more of her for five-and-twenty years. Meanwhile, he had idealised her into the Dora of *David Copperfield*; but when he met her again, she was so changed and he so disillusioned that she served him as a model also for Flora Finching, of *Little Dorrit*.

Plough Court, Lombard Street, in which Alexander Pope was born, has lost every vestige of antiquity; but on the opposite side of the road is George Yard, and up George Yard was the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, where, after Mrs. Bardell commenced her action against him, Mr. Pickwick went



Evelyn had a sitting in St. Nicholas Church, Deptford, and Marlowe is buried in the churchyard. Besant founded "The World Went Very Well Then" on the Chronicles of Deptford, and on a tombstone in the Church of St. Nicholas.

Chapter 8

to stay, with Sam Weller. And it not only was there, but you will find it there still, at the top of the yard, crushed in and elbowed almost out of sight by new buildings, at the corner of Bengal Court and St. Michael's Alley. A rambling, two-century old place it is, with a few old houses surviving beside it to keep it company, and a bygone, out-of-date atmosphere folding about them all that takes you back into the past whenever you breathe it. Mr. Pickwick was lodging at the George and Vulture when Mr. Jackson came round from Messrs. Dodson and Fogg's to serve subpœnas on Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass who were visiting him there; Sam Weller used to take his dinner in the back room, and was summoned thence by a messenger to that meeting with his father in Leadenhall Market; Mr. Perker called there more than once to see Mr. Pickwick about his case. Returning from Bath, Mr. Pickwick, "attended, of course, by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture," and "on the third morning after their arrival, just as all the clocks in the city were striking nine individually, and somewhere about nine hundred collectively, Sam was taking the air in George Yard, when a queer sort of fresh painted vehicle drove up, out of which there jumped, with great agility, throwing the reins to a stout man who sat beside him, a queer sort of gentleman who seemed made for the vehicle, and the vehicle for him." These were Mr. Namby and Mr. Smouch, of Bell Alley, Coleman Street, come to arrest Mr. Pickwick on a warrant for not paying the damages and costs awarded to Mrs. Bardell, and, as we have mentioned already,

they carried him off with them. It was to the George and Vulture that Mr. Pickwick returned after his happy release from the Fleet Prison; and there that old Tony Weller came to him and would have endowed him with all his own savings, believing it was poverty and not obstinacy that had made him submit to his imprisonment; it was at the George and Vulture that Mr. Winkle stayed after his marriage with Arabella Allen; and it was Mary, the pretty housemaid there, who won the heart of Sam Weller and married him at last. Yet no hint of its Pickwickian connections glorifies the outer walls of the tavern, and there is no intimation at the entrance to George Yard that the George and Vulture may be discovered with difficulty in the depths of it.

Defoe's Colonel Jack committed one of his many thefts at the Gracechurch end of Lombard Street: he knocked down and robbed a woollen draper's apprentice, who was returning from a goldsmith's in Lombard Street to his master's shop in Gracechurch Street. Master Heriot, the goldsmith, of *The Fortunes of Nigel,* had his home in Lombard Street, and some of the great scenes of the novel were enacted under his roof. And Falstaff used to come occasionally to Lombard Street, for does not Mistress Quickly tell the Sheriffs officers, Fang and Snare, whilst they are lurking in Smithfield ready to arrest Sir John if he comes there, that, if he does not arrive, "he's indited to dinner to the Lubber's Head in Lumbert Street, to Master Smooth's, the silkman"?

CHAPTER VI

TO THE TOWER

SOME of the scenes of Heywood's comedy, *The Wise-Woman of Hogsdon*, are laid in Gracechurch Street, and one of his characters, Sir Harry, whom he did not trouble to furnish with a surname, had his house here, and Sencer came to it, for the purposes of the plot, to lure Sir Harry's daughter away with a delightfully plausible bait :

> There is a cunning woman dwells not far,
> At Hogsdon, lady, famous for her skill.
> Besides some private talk that much concerns
> Your fortunes in your love, she hath to show you,
> This night, if it shall please you walk so far
> As to her house, an admirable suit
> Of costly needlework, which if you please
> You may buy under-rate for half the value
> It cost the making ; about six o'clock
> You may have view thereof, but otherwise,
> A lady that hath craved the sight thereof
> Must have the first refusal.

What woman could resist such a cunningly blended temptation ? If it were not enough that she might, by means of the Wise-Woman's magic learn, something about her lover ; there was the getting of that bargain, which might be snatched from her by another woman if she failed to arrive in time, and that in itself was irresistible. But, after all, my

chief interest in Gracechurch Street gathers about certain people who really existed. In 1830, William Hone, best remembered for his *Every-Day Book*, and his *Table-Book*, opened the Grasshopper coffee-house here, at No. 13. Hone had fallen on evil days; his friends rallied round to set him up in business, and Lamb—you never come across Lamb doing anything that is not friendly and generous—took an active part in raising subscriptions to help him. Before the shop could be opened, when it was only half fitted up, Lamb sat in it writing to Southey for assistance and explaining Hone's circumstances: "He is just now in a critical situation; kind friends have opened a coffee-house for him in the City, but their means have not extended to the purchase of coffee-pots, credit for Reviews, newspapers, and other paraphernalia. So I am sitting in the skeleton of a possible Divan. . . . Those 'Every-day' and 'Table-Books' will be a treasure a hundred years hence, but they have failed to make Hone's fortune." Over a hundred pounds was raised, Lamb starting the subscription with ten, and Hone kept the Grasshopper for three years, editing his *Year Book* from it, and filling his leisure with other literary and journalistic labours.

Continuing out of Gracechurch into Bishopsgate Street, we follow, thereafter, much of the route defined by Iniquity, when Satan, the Great Devil, summoned him up for the guidance of Pug, the Little Devil, in *The Devil is an Ass*:

> Child of hell, this is nothing! I will fetch thee a leap
> From the top of Paul's steeple to the standard in Cheap:
> And lead thee a dance through the streets without fail,

Like a needle of Spain, with a thread at my tail,
We will survey the suburbs and make forth our sallies
Down Petticoat Lane . . .
To Shoreditch, Whitechapel, and so to St. Kathern's,
To drink with the Dutch there and take forth our patterns.

Until five years ago, Crosby Hall occupied the right-hand side of Great Saint Helens, with its front on Bishopsgate Street; and had its place both in the worlds of fact and of imagination. When its builder and first tenant, the grocer-alderman, Sir Thomas Crosby died, it was sold to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and he made it his palace after he was crowned Richard III. As such it appears in Shakespeare's drama of that King. In the second scene of the first act, you have Richard stopping the bier of Henry VI. in the street and beside it making violent love to Anne, the widow of the late King's murdered son, urging her, at length, to "repair to Crosby Place," and when he has buried "this noble King" and wet his grave with repentant tears, he will come and see her there. The next scene and three others —some of the greatest in the tragedy—are laid in the Palace itself. But since the Palace is gone (it has been re-erected at Chelsea, where it looks pathetically forlorn in alien surroundings) we are more intimately concerned now with the one scene, the fourth of the fourth act, which is enacted in the street before the Palace. Thither come Queen Margaret, widow of Henry VI., Queen Elizabeth, widow of Edward IV., and the Duchess of York, mother of the murdered Edward IV., of the murdered Clarence, and of Richard III., and when Elizabeth and the Duchess, mourning their bitter wrongs,

seat themselves upon the ground in despair, more womanly than queenly, Margaret sinks down wearily beside them, saying :

If ancient sorrow be most reverend,
Give mine the benefit of seniory,
And let my griefs frown on the upper hand.
If sorrow can admit society,
Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine :
I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him ;
I had a Harry, till a Richard killed him :
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard killed him ;
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him.
Duchess. I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him ;
I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.
Queen Margaret. Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard killed him.
From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death :
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
To worry lambs, and lap their gentle blood,
That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,
Thy womb let loose to chase us to our graves.
O ! upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan.
Duchess. O ! Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes :
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.
Queen Margaret. Bear with me ; I am hungry for revenge. . . .

And by-and-by, enters "King Richard, and his Train, marching," to find his path impeded by these prostrate and distracted women ; and whilst he is cunningly comforting them and subtly winning

them to condone his crimes, messenger after messenger arrives bringing him news of the rising against him all over the country, the beginning of the end of his power, till in a momentary irritation he strikes one of them with a frienzied, "Out on ye, owls! nothing but songs of death?" Then he learns that this man's tidings are more favourable, and presently the rascally Catesby hurries in to announce:

My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken,
That is the best news: that the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford
Is colder news, but yet they must be told.
King Richard. Away towards Salisbury! while we reason here,
A royal battle might be won and lost.
Some one take order Buckingham be brought
To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

And so, with his soldiery, he passes away up the street to his death on the Tamworth battle-field. Did it all happen so? It happened so in Shakespeare's imagination, and that is enough for us, and enough to hold us dreaming his dreams over again in this street of Bishopsgate till we lose sight of the long stretch of modern buildings, and of the buses and carts and modern traffic in the road, and can see the Palace back here again with its garden, the stately houses of great merchants, the pent-house shops, each with its sign hanging out before it, and the frowning Bishop's Gate stretching across the way between Wormwood Street and Camomile Street, and nearer to us the quaint church of St. Ethelburga, older even than the Palace, and still retaining its place, though it is so encroached upon

and hemmed in by a huddle of little old shops that you may almost pass it without being aware of its existence.

Across the road, where Palmerstone Buildings stand, was the Bull Inn, to which Hobson, the carrier used to drive from Cambridge, and in whose yard Burbage and Tarleton used to act Shakespeare's plays. Not far beyond it was the great mansion of Sir Thomas Gresham, whose tomb is in St. Helen's Church, which is down the court here, immediately beside the site of Crosby Palace, and is also older than the Palace was. In the church, too, are the tombs of Sir John Crosby, and of the merchant adventurer, William Bond, who succeeded Sir Thomas More, and More's son-in-law, William Roper, as tenant of Crosby Hall.

Monopoly, in Webster's *Westward Ho!* mentions that he is going "to sup to-night at the Lion in Shoreditch;" and you gather from other references that he is often in that neighbourhood, but we are not going there even though Shoreditch is rich in literary associations. In Spitalfields, you may discover without difficulty Sweet Lilac Walk, at whose Common Lodging House Dr. Luttrel, in Besant's *Bell of St. Paul's*, bought the small boy, Sammy, for five pounds; after he was gone Sammy's old grandmother sent his shrewd little sister Sal to see where he was taken to, and she chased the four-wheel cab citywards, and it went "down Bishopsgate Street and Gracechurch Street: it turned westward to Cannon Street: at Queen Street it turned again to the south and crossed the river by Southwark Bridge." It stopped at a house on Bankside,

where we shall arrive later on; but we are not going to Spitalfields. Shoreditch and Spitalfields lie in the region beyond the end of Bishopsgate Street Without; beyond Norton Folgate, in which was situated the business premises of Messrs. Quodling and Co. who employed Mr. Gammon, of Gissing's *Town Traveller*, and whence Mr. Gammon had come when Mr. Greenacre overtook him in Threadneedle Street. We are not even going so far along Bishopsgate Street Without as to Middlesex Street, which is the proper name of Petticoat Lane. Yet it is worth a visit, for since the days of Elizabeth it has been so much mentioned or described in stories, sketches and plays; but you must visit it on a Sunday morning, for every Sunday morning it springs into phenomenal life and activity and an overflowing Jewish market rages from one end to the other of it and surges and roars in all the adjacent streets until past noon. It is Bartholomew Fair on a small scale: in the matter of entertainment it does not go much beyond shooting galleries, and gramophones, but toy-stalls, refreshment stalls, and stalls for the sale of all manner of goods are there in bewildering abundance and variety and all the shops put on a holiday air, with the shopkeepers shouting at their doors as they used to along Cheapside in the days when Lydgate's Lackpenny came to London.

Our way lies along Houndsditch, and we ought not to go so far down Bishopsgate Street as to Liverpool Street, but it yawns so near, just across the road, that one is tempted to stray aside into it for a minute to Liverpool Street Station, because Gissing

has touched it with romance. For a long time Polly Sparkes, of *The Town Traveller*, had been keeping Christopher Parish in suspense. He was employed at a small salary by Swettenham's, and she knew that as soon as he got a "rise" he would ask her to marry him, but she was not at all sure that it would be "good enough." He had been vainly trying to make money by competing for the dazzling prizes offered by a popular paper, and one day she has an excited telegram from him:

"*Great news. Do meet me at entrance to Liverpool Street Station one o'clock. Wonderful news.*"

She assumes that he has got his rise—probably another five shillings a week—and keeps the appointment in an uncertain frame of mind.

"A little before one o'clock she was at Liverpool Street, sheltered from a drizzle that brought down all the smoke of myriad chimneys. A slim figure in overcoat and shining hat rushed through the puddles towards her, waving an umbrella to the peril of other people, speeding only less frantically.

"'Polly, I've got it.' He could gasp no more; he seized her arm as if for support.

"'How much is it?' she asked calmly.

"'Five hundred and fifty pounds! *Hyjene!*'

"'What—five hundred and fifty a year?'

"Christopher stared at her. 'You don't understand. The missing word. I've got it this week. Cheque for five hundred and fifty pounds. *Hyjene!*'

"'*Reely!*'

"'Look here—here's the cheque! *Hyjene!*'

"Polly fingered the paper, studied the inscription. All the time she was thinking that this sum of money would furnish a house in a style vastly superior to that of Mrs. Nibby's. Mrs. Nibby would go black in the face with envy, hatred and malice. As she reflected Christopher talked, drawing her to the least-

frequented part of the huge roaring railway station. 'Will you, Polly? Why don't you speak? Do, Polly, do!'

"She all but spoke, would have done but for an ear-rending whistle from an engine.

"'I shall have a rise, too, Polly. I'm feeling my feet at Swettenham's. Who knows what I may get to? Polly, I might—I might some day have a big business of my own, and build a house at Eastbourne. It's all on the cards, Polly. Others have done it before me. Swettenham began as a clerk—he did. Think, Polly, five hundred and fifty pounds—*Hyjene!*'

"She met his eye; she nodded.

"'You *will*?'

"'Don't mind if I do.'

"'Hooray! *Hyjene* for ever! Hooray—ay—ay!'"

Or at Liverpool Street Station we may meet three of Gissing's people whom we have seen before in these pages. Jane Snowdon, her grandfather, and Sidney Kirkwood, out of *The Nether World*, had arranged to go on a holiday together to Chelmsford—a holiday fraught with brief happiness and long tragedy for two of them; for it was whilst they were away there that Sidney and Jane realised that they loved each other. Jane had never been into the country before, and was in a fever of apprehensions till they had started:

"The last week was a time of impatience, resolutely suppressed. On the Saturday afternoon Sidney was to meet them at Liverpool Street. Would anything happen these last few days—this last day—this last hour? No; all three stood together on the platform, and their holiday had already begun.

"Over the pest-stricken regions of East London, sweltering in sunshine which served only to reveal the intimacies of abomination; across miles of a city of the damned, such as thought never conceived before this age of ours; above streets swarming with a nameless populace, cruelly exposed by the

unwonted light of heaven; stopping at stations which it crushes the heart to think should be the destination of any mortal; the train made its way at length beyond the outmost limits of dread, and entered upon a land of level meadows, of hedges and trees, of crops and cattle."

With its great gateways, its long, always busy approaches, its staircases and bridges, its high sweep of glass roof and many platforms, Liverpool Street is too like any other London terminus to need describing in detail; but I think of that last passage we have quoted, and a score of others from Gissing's works, when his critics tell us that he loathed and despised the poor he had been forced to live among and was never in sympathy with them.

Houndsditch was originally a wide ditch just outside the City wall. When it was filled in and the street built, it seems to have fallen into the hands of the Jews, who are its chief inhabitants to this day. Second-hand clothes dealers are plentiful in the lanes and furtive alleys to the left which taper away towards Petticoat Lane; and most of the names over the very miscellaneous shops of Houndsditch are the names of English or foreign Jews. One thing that warms me towards the street is a worn old tavern in it that is called the Ben Jonson. Nowadays the reputation of "Rare Ben" has contracted, and he is no god any longer except in literary circles; but in his own age, and for years after, his name was familiar to the multitude; he was a glorious magnetic personality in the social as well as in the theatrical life of his time, and it is significant of his popularity as a true Londoner that inns crowned with his name were dotted all about the

town whose streets and byways are inseparably associated with him and his work. I have known several, and five of them still flourish, four in central London, and one as far afield as Harrow Road.

We turn up St. Mary Axe, which we have already glanced at from the other end; and I wish again there were more of the old houses left in it, and one that we might recognise as the house of Pubsey and Co. to the roof of which Riah, Jenny Wren and Lizzie Hexam would climb, to "come and be dead," to rest and chat and forget the worries of the world below under the wide sky, among the chimney-stacks. This being past praying for, however, we take the first turning to the left out of St. Mary Axe, and are in Bevis Marks, and here we are a little more fortunate. There is only one tavern in Bevis Marks; it is on the eastern side, at an odd corner where the street falls away slightly before it merges into Duke Street; and this is the public-house that enjoyed the patronage of no less a person than Dick Swiveller. The offices of Mr. Sampson Brass used to be hereabouts, and this was "Mr. Swiveller's usual house of entertainment in Bevis Marks." Quilp dropped in to see him in it one day just as he "sat down alone to dinner in its dusky parlour." From Sampson Brass's office Dick was in the habit of "darting across the street for a glass of mild porter," so you may make up your mind that the office was over the way, and over the way, until lately, survived an old house that may well have been that which Sampson and his sister occupied. A mean, wizened, ghostly looking house, discoloured with age, that with its step or two up to the front door, its dull,

low window, its grated basement, and the curious air of slyness and secrecy that brooded over it, seemed far more in harmony with all we know of the Brasses than does the larger house next but one to the tavern which has also strong points of resemblance to the house as Dickens sketched it. He says it was " a small dark house," and

" In the parlour window of this little habitation, which is so close upon the footway that the passenger who takes the wall brushes the dim glass with his coat-sleeve—much to its improvement, for it is very dirty—in this parlour window, in the days of its occupation by Sampson Brass, there hung, all awry and slack and discoloured by the sun, a curtain of faded green, so threadbare from long service as by no means to intercept the view of the little dark room, but rather to afford a favourable medium through which to observe it accurately. There was not much to look at. A rickety table, with spare bundles of papers, yellow and ragged from long carriage in the pocket, ostentatiously displayed upon its top ; a couple of stools, set face to face on opposite sides of this crazy piece of furniture ; a treacherous old chair by the fireplace, whose withered arms had hugged full many a client and helped to squeeze him dry ; a second-hand wig-box, used as a depository for blank writs and declarations and other small forms of law, once the sole contents of the head which belonged to the wig which belonged to the box, as they were now of the box itself ; two or three common books of practice ; a jar of ink, a pounce box, a stunted hearth-broom, a carpet trodden to shreds but still clinging with the tightness of desperation to its tacks—these, with the yellow wainscot of the walls, the smoke-discoloured ceiling, the dust and cobwebs, were among the most prominent decorations of the office of Mr Sampson Brass. But this was mere still-life, of no greater importance than the plate, ' BRASS, Solicitor,' upon the door, and the bill, ' First floor to let to a single gentleman,' which was tied to the knocker. The office commonly held two examples of animated nature.

Of these, one was Mr Brass himself. . . . The other was his clerk, assistant, housekeeper, secretary, confidential plotter, adviser, intriguer, and bill of cost increaser, Miss Brass—a kind of amazon at common law . . . a lady of thirty-five or thereabouts, of a gaunt and bony figure, and a resolute bearing which, if it repressed the softer emotions of love and kept admirers at a distance, certainly inspired a feeling akin to awe in the breasts of those male strangers who had the happiness to approach her."

Not only the house of Sampson Brass in Bevis Marks and the tavern nearly opposite, but the whole of the street itself belong to *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The parlour of that small dark house was the clerks' office of the Brass establishment, and for a time Dick Swiveller and Sally sat in it daily, facing each other at the tall desk, and despite the lady's stern, forbidding aspect, the blandishments of Dick Swiveller were so potent with her that after a while he could with impunity snatch off her fluttering head-dress to rub the window clean when he wanted to look out. In the basement under the office toiled that pitiable little drudge, the Marchionesss, whom Dick secretly befriended. Didn't he go down, when Sampson and Sally were out, and produce a pack of cards and initiate her into the mysteries of a game? Didn't he, on at least one occasion, slip across the road to his favourite tavern and return followed by the potboy carrying a sumptuous meal on a tray for that same Marchioness? To the office Kit came again and again, and in the office, having sent Dick out, Sampson from time to time interviewed the boy and matured his plan for having a certain bank-note found upon Kit's person in order

that he might have him arrested on a charge of stealing it. And to the office one morning came that gay spirit, Mr. Chuckster, one of Mr. Swiveller's boon companions and a brother-member of the Glorious Apollos. He rang the bell, Dick opened, and Mr. Chuckster greeted him with characteristic facetiousness:

"'You're devilish early at this pestiferous old slaughter-house,' said that gentleman, poising himself on one leg and shaking the other in an easy manner.

'Rather,' returned Dick.

'Rather!' returned Mr. Chuckster, with that air of graceful trifling which so well became him. 'I should think so. Why, my good feller, do you know what o'clock it is—half past nine A.M. in the morning?'

'Won't you come in?' said Dick. 'All alone. Swiveller solus. "'Tis now the witching—"

'"Hour of night!"

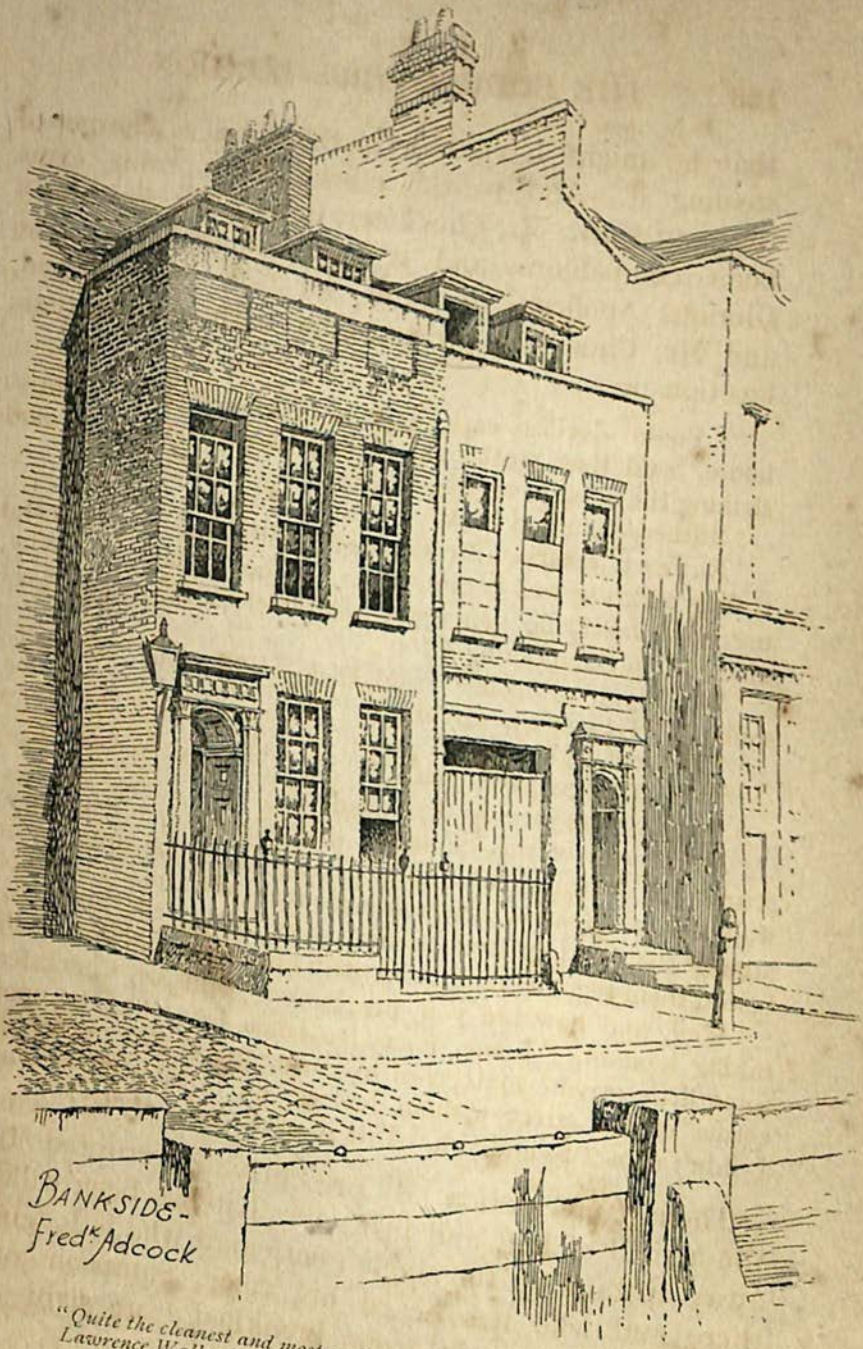
'"When churchyards yawn,"

'"And graves give up their dead."

'At the end of this quotation in dialogue, each gentleman struck an attitude, and immediately subsiding into prose walked into the office. Such morsels of enthusiasm are common among the Glorious Apollos, and were indeed the links that bound them together and raised them above the cold dull earth.

'Well, and how are you, my buck?' said Mr. Chuckster, taking a stool. 'I was forced to come into the City upon some little private matters of my own, and couldn't pass the corner of the street without looking in, but upon my soul I didn't expect to find you. It is so everlastingly early.'"

Their conversation is presently interrupted by the arrival of Kit, and just after Kit has been called away upstairs by the single gentleman who is lodging there and who has heard his voice, Sampson and Sally Brass come in from breakfast; at sight of



"Quite the cleanest and most respectable house on the Bank Side," wherein Lawrence Waller had taken lodgings. Besant, "The Bell of St. Paul's."

Chapter 8

them Mr. Chuckster retires; Sampson despatches Mr. Swiveller with a letter to Peckham Rye, then taps his nose to his sister, who leaves him alone, and he waits thus till Kit comes down from the lodger, when he beckons him into the office with his pen, chats with him of Quilp, and tips him generously, in pursuance of that scheme for his downfall. Quilp was in and out of the office frequently. The single gentleman, lodging upstairs, was, you know, little Nell's uncle, the younger son of that old grandfather with whom she went on her eventful wanderings. He was drawn to the lodgings partly by that bill tied to the knocker, and partly no doubt by a knowledge of Sampson Brass's connection with the two wanderers whom he was anxious to find. He had learned that they were last seen in the company of those strolling Punch and Judy proprietors, Messrs Codlin and Short, and his efforts to meet or hear news of them accounted for some of those eccentricities of his that annoyed and puzzled Sampson and his sister:

"The single gentleman among his other peculiarities—and he had a very plentiful stock, of which he every day furnished some new specimen—took a most extraordinary and remarkable interest in the exhibition of Punch. If the sound of a Punch's voice, at ever so remote a distance, reached Bevis Marks, the single gentleman, though in bed and asleep, would start up and hurrying on his clothes, make for the spot with all speed, and presently returned at the end of a long procession of idlers, having in the midst the theatre and its proprietors. Straightway, the stage would be set up in front of Mr. Brass's house; the single gentleman would establish himself at the first floor window; and the entertainment would proceed, with all its exciting accompaniments of fife

and drum and shout, to the excessive consternation of sober votaries of business in that silent thoroughfare. It might have been expected that when the play was done both players and audience would have dispersed; but the epilogue was as bad as the play, for no sooner was the Devil dead, than the manager of the puppets and his partner were summoned by the single gentleman to his chamber, where they were regaled with strong waters from his private store, and where they held long conversations, the purport of which no human being could fathom. But the secret of these discussions was of little importance. It was sufficient to know that while they were proceeding, the concourse without still lingered round the house; that boys beat upon the drum with their fists, and imitated Punch with their tender voices; that the office window was rendered opaque by flattened noses and the key-hole of the street door luminous with eyes; that every time the single gentleman or either of his guests were seen at the upper window, or so much as the end of one of their noses was visible, there was a great shout of execration from the excluded mob, who remained howling and yelling and refusing consolation, until the exhibitors were delivered up to them to be attended elsewhere. It was sufficient, in short, to know that Bevis Marks was revolutionised by these popular movements, and that peace and quietness fled from its precincts."

Sampson Brass was particularly exasperated by this state of things, but he could not afford to put his foot down and lose an uncommonly profitable lodger; Mr. Swiveller, however, enjoyed it, and he and Sally generally watched the performances from their window; until a day came when the men with Punch turned out to be Codlin and Short themselves, and the single gentleman had no interest in such shows thereafter. It is glory enough for Bevis Marks that Codlin and Short once performed in it before Mr. Brass's door; and if you say that none

of these things ever really happened, I would like you to tell me of anything in Bevis Marks's history that seems more real. There is a synagogue close by in Bury Street that was attended by Isaac D'Israeli; Lord Beaconsfield, in his boyhood, went there with his father, till they seceded from the Jewish faith; but for every one who associates Bevis Marks with them now there are at least a thousand who associate it with the Brasses and Quilp, with Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness, with Codlin and Short and the tale of Little Nell.

Wherever you go about central London you pass by places that Defoe has made memorable in his *Journal of the Plague*. He tells you of the distracted preachers who haunted the streets: of one in particular who went hither and thither by day and night crying out dreadfully, "Yet forty days, and London shall be destroyed." He tells you how in those days of desolation he (or the imaginary writer of the *Journal*) saw the grass growing along Bishopsgate, and the dead being buried in great pits in Hand Alley, Bishopsgate, and in Petticoat Lane; but some of the most terribly vivid incidents he describes have Houndsditch for their scene; as thus:

"As I went along Houndsditch one morning about eight o'clock, there was a great noise . . . the outcry was loud enough to prompt my curiosity, and I called to one, who looked out of a window, and asked what was the matter. A watchman, it seems, had been employed to keep his post at the door of a house which was infected, or said to be infected, and was shut up. He had been there all night, for two nights together, as he told his story, and the day watchman had

been there one day, and was now come to relieve him. All this while no noise had been heard in the house, no light had been seen, they called for nothing, had sent him no errands, which used to be the chief business of the watchmen, neither had they given him any disturbance, as he said, from Monday afternoon, when he heard a great crying and screaming in the house, which, as he supposed, was occasioned by some of the family dying just at that time. It seems the night before, the dead-cart, as it was called, had been stopped there, and a servant maid had been brought down to the door dead, and the buriers or bearers, as they were called, put her into the cart, wrapped only in a green rug, and carried her away. The watchman had knocked at the door, it seems, when he heard that noise and crying, as above, and nobody answered a great while; but at last one looked out and said, with an angry quick tone, and yet in a kind of crying voice, or a voice of one that was crying, 'What d'ye want, that you make such a knocking?' He answered, 'I am the watchman; how do you do? What is the matter?' The person answered, 'What is that to you? Stop the dead-cart.' This it seems was about one o'clock; soon after, as the fellow said, he stopped the dead-cart, and then knocked again, but nobody answered. He continued knocking, and the bellman called out several times, 'Bring out your dead;' but nobody answered, till the man that drove the cart being called to other houses, would stay no longer, and drove away.

"The watchman knew not what to make of all this, so he let them alone till the morning-man, or day-watchman as they called him, came to relieve him; giving him an account of the particulars, they knocked at the door a great while, but nobody answered, and they observed that the window or casement at which the person looked out who had answered before, continued open, being up two pair of stairs. Upon this the two men, to satisfy their curiosity, got a long ladder, and one of them went up to the window and looked into the room, where he saw a woman lying dead upon the floor, in a dismal manner, having no clothes on her but her shift; but though he called aloud, and putting in his long staff knocked hard on the floor,

yet nobody stirred or answered, neither could he hear any noise in the house. He came down again upon this, and acquainted his fellow, who went up also, and finding it just so, they resolved to acquaint either the Lord Mayor or some other magistrate of it, but did not offer to go in at the window. The magistrate, it seems, upon the information of the two men, ordered the house to be broke open, a constable and other persons being appointed to be present that nothing might be plundered; and accordingly it was so done, when nobody was found in the house but that young woman who, having been infected and past recovery, the rest had left her to die by herself, and every one gone, having found some way to delude the watchman and to get open the door, or get out at some back-door, or over the tops of the houses, so that he knew nothing of it; and as to those cries and shrieks which he heard, it was supposed they were the passionate cries of the family at this bitter parting, which to be sure it was to them all, this being the sister to the mistress of the family. The man of the house, his wife, several children and servants, being all gone and fled, whether sick or sound, that I could never learn, nor, indeed, did I make much enquiry after it."

But of Defoe's Houndsditch pictures none takes such a strong hold on the imagination and the memory as his lurid, unforgettable description of the plague pit that was dug in the churchyard there, and of some of the bizarre incidents that happened around it. The church of St. Botolph, Aldgate, stands at the eastern corner of Houndsditch, and at the back of the churchyard still runs the Alley that Defoe mentions; it opens out of Houndsditch, and beyond the wall of the churchyard turns to the right and brings you into Aldgate, by the Three Nuns Tavern, a successor to the inn of the same name that figures in the *Journal of the Plague*. The imaginary citizen who kept the *Journal* lived in Aldgate, and says

he never had any fears for his own safety until "they dug the great pit in the churchyard of our parish of Aldgate." He describes it as a "dreadful gulf," and says that people of the parish protested against the unnecessary size of it, but the churchwardens knew what they were about, many other pits had already been filled, and this too was full before the plague ended:

"A terrible pit it was, and I could not resist my curiosity to go and see it; as near as I may judge, it was about forty feet in length, and about fifteen or sixteen feet broad; and, at the time I first looked at it, about nine feet deep; but it was said they dug it near twenty feet deep afterwards, in one part of it, till they could go no deeper for the water. . . . I doubt not but that there may be some ancient persons alive in the parish who can justify the fact of this, and are able to show even in what place of the churchyard the pit lay better than I can; the mark of it also was many years to be seen in the churchyard on the surface, lying in length parallel with the passage which goes by the west wall of the churchyard, out of Houndsditch, and turns east again into Whitechapel, coming out near the Three Nuns Inn."

The entry relating to this dreadful pit is too long for quotation in full. The writer tells, in Defoe's minutely realistic fashion, of the horrors and tragic misery that happened about its black depth; how the carts came up by night loaded with the dead who were flung into it; how in the light of fires and torches that flared beside it, men grief-stricken by the loss of all they loved would come crying and raging desperately to the pit's edge; how poor wretches, mad with knowing that the plague was upon them, would rush across the churchyard and hurl themselves down upon the massed bodies heaped

in that appalling hole. On the 10th September 1665, says the writer of the *Journal*, "my curiosity led, or rather drove me to go and see this pit again." By day, loose earth was strewn over those who lay in it; so he "resolved to go in the night, and see some of them thrown in." He knew the sexton, who was willing to admit him into the churchyard but was trying to dissuade him from the risk of going, when "I saw two links come over from the end of the Minories" (which is almost opposite the church), "and heard the bellman, and then appeared a dead-cart, as they called it, coming over the streets; so I could no longer resist my desire of seeing, and went in." He found lingering by the pit, a weeping wretch wrapped in a brown cloak; his wife and several of his children were in this cart that was just arriving, and when he saw "the cart turned round and the bodies shot into the pit promiscuously," he was so overcome that he fell in a swoon. When he recovered, the bearers "led him away to the Pye Tavern, over against the end of Houndsditch, where, it seems, the man was known, and where they took care of him." As the author of the *Journal* was leaving the churchyard, "and turning up the street towards my own house, I saw another cart, with links, and a bellman going before, coming out of Harrow Alley, in the Butcher-row, on the other side of the way;" it was full of bodies and came directly to the church. He goes on to tell you of that Pye Tavern. It had become the haunt of "a dreadful set of fellows" in whom the plague had produced a spirit of godless and reckless defiance; they drank and revelled there roaringly. "They

sat generally in a room next the street; and as they always kept late hours, so when the dead-cart came across the street end to go into Houndsditch, which was in view of the tavern windows, they would frequently open the windows as soon as they heard the bell, and look out at them; and as they might often hear sad lamentations of the people in the streets, or at their windows, as the carts went along, they would make their impudent mocks and jeers at them, especially if they heard the poor people call upon God to have mercy upon them, as many would do at those times, in their ordinary passing along the streets."

Is it possible to imagine that such a Walpurgis-night tavern ever stood among the dingy, decorous shops at this end of Houndsditch, with those devil-may-care drunkards lolling from its windows making the ghastly nights more hideous? It has vanished like a nightmare; yet I cannot tread that end of Houndsditch without having the light of those links flickering in my eyes, the rumble of the dead-cart, the clang of the bell and those raucous voices in my ears. Here still is the churchyard, once a place of wildest, darkest horror, looking peaceful enough now in the afternoon sunlight, with its worn, old tombstones brooding amid the long grass, the scar of that grisly pit so completely healed that you can see no trace of it.

If we take the ancient passage out of Houndsditch, by the wall at the back of the churchyard, we walk near the edge of the fearsome, invisible pit; and following the turn of the passage, to the right, we emerge upon Aldgate, against the Three

Nuns Tavern. Aldgate—the gate itself—used to stand to the west of Houndsditch (Chaucer for a time lived in a house over the gateway); and Defoe's imaginary writer of the *Journal* says, "I lived without Aldgate, about midway between Aldgate Church and Whitechapel Bars, on the left hand, or north side of the street." So he must have lived facing the Butcher Row that he talks of, and that still stands, retaining its ancient character and much of its ancient aspect. If you have read the *Journal of the Plague* and Harrison Ainsworth's best novel, *Old St. Paul's* (which draws freely on Defoe for its scenes and incidents), all London, from Holborn and the Strand to Aldgate, is curiously, eerily alive for you with memories of that blackest year in the city's history; certain streets and corners are for ever inseparable from some sharply definite development of the plague, and nearly all these remembrances are charged with pain and terror, but at the corner of the Minories, whence Defoe's *Journalist* saw the links coming with the dead-cart, there is a quaver of lighter voices in the air—of voices full of a relief and thankfulness that strangely touches your emotions; for Defoe (or his *Journalist*) records how, when the worst of the plague was over, and the citizens moving abroad more freely again,

"It was a common thing to meet people in the street that were strangers, and that we knew nothing at all of, expressing their surprise. Going one day through Aldgate, and a pretty many people being passing and repassing, there comes a man out of the end of the Minories, and looking a little up the street and down, he throws his hands abroad: Lord, what an alteration is here! Why, last week I came along here and

hardly any body was to be seen. Another man, I heard him, adds to his words: 'Tis all wonderful, 'tis all a dream. Blessed be God, says a third man, and let us give thanks to Him, for 'tis all His own doing. Human help and human skill was at an end. These were all strangers to one another; but such salutations as these were frequent in the street every day; and in spite of a loose behaviour, the very common people went along the streets giving thanks to God for their deliverance."

Our way lies through the Minories, but before we go on I want to make a flying visit to one or two places farther eastwards. The literary associations of the East End need a book to themselves; it is impossible to deal adequately with them here, where considerations of space keep us from straying much beyond the square mile of the actual city of London. Aldgate, Whitechapel, Mile End—they were all common ground for the Elizabethan playwrights; the train bands used to march out for practice at Mile End, and I have an odd kindness to that "Ned of Aldgate," the drummer of whom casual, passing mention is made in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle,* one scene of which is laid at Mile End. The shadow of Defoe's ubiquitous Colonel Jack roams all about Whitechapel, Bethnal Green and Mile End: his clothes being worn to rags, the young rapscallion went into a broker's shop near Whitechapel church and laid out part of his share of a recent robbery on the purchase of a new suit, and afterwards went into the churchyard to put the things on. The *Journal of the Plague* tells grisly tales of Whitechapel; the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, was a stopping place of the coach driven by Mr.

Weller, and Mr. Pickwick set out thence on his journey to Ipswich, and discoursed with Mr. Weller on the queerness of the lives lived by turnpike keepers as they passed the Mile End turnpike; and when the small David Copperfield first came to London, from Blunderstone, in Suffolk, he was set down at an inn "in the Whitechapel district. . . . I forget whether it was the Blue Bull, or the Blue Boar; but I know it was the Blue Something, and that its likeness was painted on the back of the coach;" and here Mr. Mell, the poor usher of Mr. Creakle's school met him and took him on to Blackheath. But Dickens is all about the East End; he and Sala have left sketches of its highways and byways, and many scenes of *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend* take place in its most squalid quarters. Rogue Riderhood lived at Limehouse, and Miss Abbey Potterson kept the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters there by the waterside. Gissing went little into the east; he found squalor and drabness enough for his purposes among the lives that were lived in the north and the south of London. No novelist of recent years was more closely identified with the East End than Sir Walter Besant; he knew the east, its slums and its grinding poverty, the manners and habits of its people, the peculiar characteristics of every part of it, and knew them intimately. He was a born teller of readable tales, but he lacked the touch of genius that would have enabled him to make his characters live and his tales immortal. Already for a modern reader, they are a little old-fashioned, a little dull. In one or two of them he is so bent on using his wide knowledge of past and

present London that they are less novels than guide-books in disguise; in all of them he writes more as a romancist than a realist, and in some of them more as a reformer than as a romancist. His favourite scheme was to have some very wealthy man or girl and to send him or her to work in the East End for the betterment of the poor; he was too much taken up with propaganda; he was full of sympathy for those who slaved and starved and lived miserably in London's underworld, but he went among them not in the spirit of an artist, keen to study character and realise and reveal things as he saw them, but in the spirit of the University Settlement worker, the kindly, conscientious philanthropist who was anxious to get up facts and expound them and lecture about them and show how the worst evils of poverty might be ameliorated. Too frequently, the artist is altogether lost in the social reformer; but though his novels are dying they were not written in vain. They were written with a purpose, and something of their purpose has been achieved. He will be remembered at the end of the day, I think, as a nineteenth-century Stow (his topographical works have an abiding historical value), and as the author of *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*—not because that is the most interesting, the best imagined or the ablest of his many novels, but because its dream of the wealthy young lady who went to dwell among the poor of Stepney, set up in business and found work for the girls of the neighbourhood, established a Club for them, and finally reared a Palace of Delight which should serve as a centre of mental and physical training and general social intercourse

for all the poverty-bitten district, resulted in the building and endowing of the People's Palace, which stands in the Mile End Road and is Besant's truest and sufficient monument. Poets and novelists have often enough dreamed dreams in which their fellow men have been uplifted and in divers ways made happier, but when before did any poet or novelist see his thought so quickly and exactly materialised in actual brick and stone? If you have been to some of the lectures, concerts and meetings there you will know the People's Palace is an oasis of light and refreshment in a dark and desert place. I was wandering along Mile End Road one dismal Sunday evening, not long after Besant had died, and noting the announcement of an organ recital posted outside the Palace I went in and sat in the great hall while it filled. Young and old, well dressed and shabby, happy and unhappy—they filtered quickly in and took their seats, and sat, silent or chattering softly, waiting patiently till it was the hour for beginning; and it was touching to see among them so many pale and wistful faces, so many that were lined with care and weariness, so many who were obviously poor and heavy laden. And when the first low notes began to breathe from the organ-loft a deep silence fell upon all the assembly, and looking over its sea of white, intent faces, the gauntest of them strangely softened already as under some magical dream-light, I could not help thinking, while the music gathered in fulness and majesty, of the foul slums and mean streets, the drab, cramped houses and close rooms, the broken hearts and broken lives that lay in the night all about this Palace—I could

not help thinking of these things until the music seemed to be nothing but the voice of them all, weeping quietly, crying out in impotent grief and anger, throbbing with despair and regret, mellowing to a restful resignation, yet rising out of that, at last, to a passionate appeal which swelled and grew until it seemed to soar like a very fountain of prayer against the sin of this rich, Christian city in which there is so much selfish luxury and wrong, so much of penury and suffering and such foolish waste of life.

Hearing this, and seeing that crowd, and seeing the work of the place on week-days, I feel that perhaps it was a finer and greater thing to have written *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* than to have been a rarer artist and have written immortal novels. To have created the People's Palace, to have lighted a torch in the darkness of the East End that shines like a morning star on the forehead of the new day, was no small achievement. The book will soon be old-fashioned and unreadable and so die, but its influence will outlast it, and will be stronger and more far-reaching than anyone can know. Therefore Besant becomes more than respectable, and some of the scenes that his fancy played with are shrines for the pilgrim.

In Mile End Road are the Trinity Almshouses, built by the Corporation of Trinity House in 1695 as a home of rest for master mariners, and their wives or widows; to the Almshouses went Angela, the heroine of *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, with Mr. Bunker, on a visit to old Captain Sorensen, and they remain much as Angela saw them:

"She observed that she was standing at a wicket gate, and that over the gate was the effigy of a ship in full sail done in stone. Mr. Bunker opened the door, and led the way to the court within. Then a great stillness fell upon the girl's spirit. Outside the wagons, carts and omnibuses thundered and rolled. You could hear them plainly enough; you could hear the tramp of a thousand feet. But the noise outside was only a contrast to the quiet within. A wall of brick with iron railings separated the tumult from the calm. It seemed as if, within that court, there was no noise at all, so sharp and sudden was the contrast. She stood in an oblong court, separated from the road by the wall above named. On either hand was a row of small houses containing, apparently, four rooms each. They were built of red brick, and were bright and clean. Every house had an iron tank in front for water; there was a pavement of flags along this row, and a grass lawn occupied the middle of the court. Upon the grass stood the statue of a benefactor, and at the end of the court was a chapel. It was a very little chapel, but was approached by a most enormous and disproportionate flight of stone steps, which might have been originally cut for the portal of St. Paul's Cathedral. The steps were surmounted by a great doorway, which occupied the whole west front of the chapel. No one was moving about the place except an old lady, who was drawing water from her tank.

"'Pretty place, ain't it?' asked Mr. Bunker.

"'It seems peaceful and quiet,' said the girl. . . .

"He led the way, making a most impertinent echo with the heels of his boots. Angela observed immediately that there was another court beyond the first. In fact it was larger; the houses were of stone, and of greater size; and it was if anything more solemnly quiet. It was possessed of silence. Here there is another statue erected to the memory of the Founder, who, it is stated on the pedestal, died, being then 'Commander of a Shipp' in the East Indes, in the year 1686. The gallant captain is represented in the costume of the period. He wears a coat with many buttons, large cuffs, and full skirts; the coat is buttoned a good way below the waist, showing the

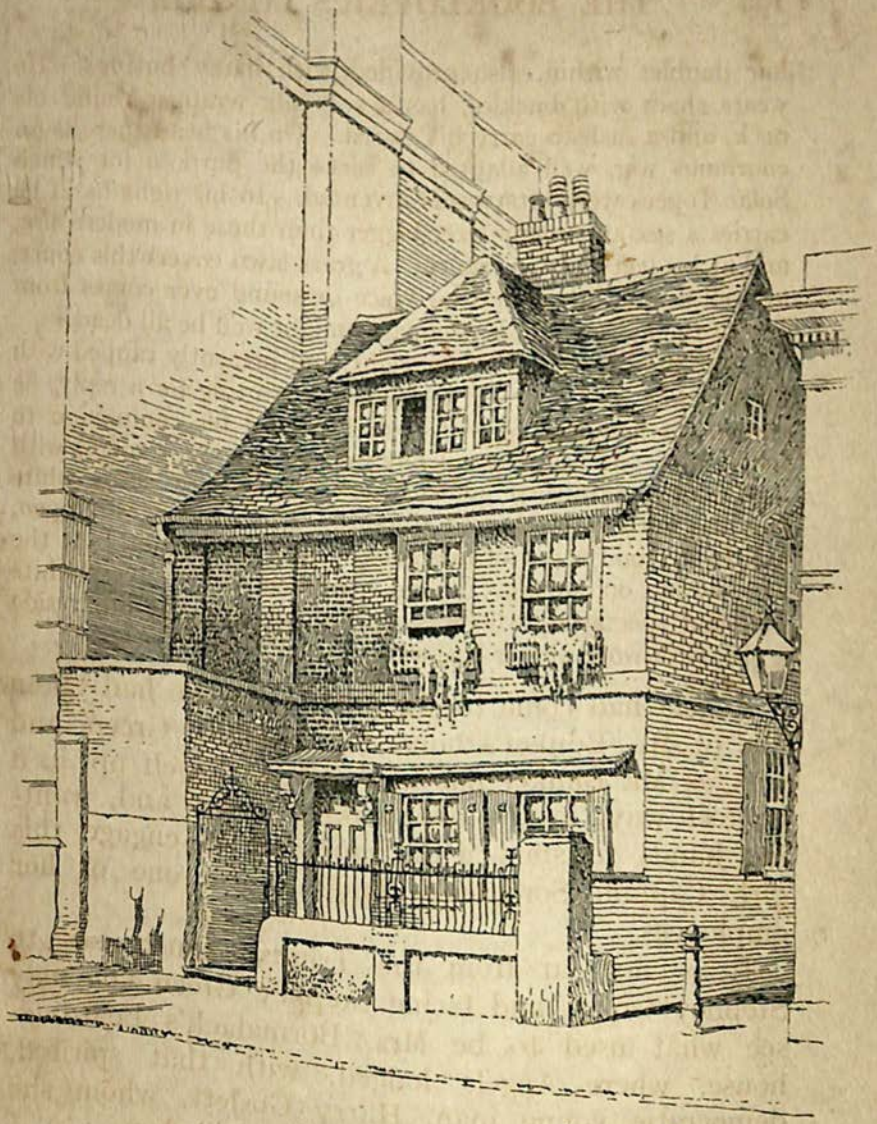
fair doublet within, also provided with many buttons. He wears shoes with buckles, has a soft silk wrapper round his neck, and a sash to carry his sword. On his head there is an enormous wig, well adapted to serve the purpose for which Solar Topees were afterwards invented. In his right hand he carries a sextant, many sizes bigger than those in modern use, and at his feet dolphins sport. A grass lawn covers this court, as well as the other, and no voice or sound ever comes from any of the houses, whose occupants might well be all dead.

"Mr. Bunker turned to the right, and presently rapped with his knuckles at a door. Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned the handle, and with a nod invited his companion to follow him. It was a small but well-proportioned room, with low ceiling, furnished sufficiently. There were clean white curtains with rose-coloured ribbons. The window was open, and in it stood a pot of mignonette, now at its best. At the window sat, on one side, an old gentleman with silvery white hair and spectacles, who was reading, and on the other side a girl, with work on her lap, was sewing."

Angela had come to announce that she had taken one of Mr. Bunker's houses on Stepney Green, and was, as Mr. Bunker put it, "setting herself up, in a genteel way, in the dressmaking line," and, wanting hands to start with, proposed to engage this girl, Captain Sorensen's daughter, as one of her employees.

It is not far from the Trinity Almshouses to Stepney Green, and facing Stepney Green you may see what used to be Mrs. Bormalack's boarding-house, where Angela lodged, with that spirited, democratic young man, Harry Goslett, whom she was ultimately to marry, among the boarders.

"From Stepney Green to the Trinity Almshouse is not a long way; you have, in fact, little more than to pass through a short street and to cross the road. But the road itself is note-



HOLLAND STREET
BLACKFRIARS.
Fred^k Adcock.

"Then at the end of Bankside they turn off into Holland Street."
Besant. "The Bell of St. Paul's"

Chapter 8

worthy ; for of all the roads which lead into London or out of it, this of Whitechapel is the broadest and the noblest by nature. Man, it is true, has done little to embellish it. There are no avenues of green and spreading lime trees as, one day, there shall be ; there are no stately buildings, towers, spires, miracles of architecture ; but only houses and shops which, whether small or big, are all alike mean, unlovely and depressing. Yet, in spite of all, a noble road."

The lime trees are there now ; otherwise the road is very much as it was then. Cross it, and go through the short street, and you are on Stepney Green, passing Mrs. Bormalack's boarding-house. The Green is "a small strip of Eden which has been visited by few indeed of those who do not live in its immediate vicinity."

"The house was old, built of red bricks with a 'shell' decoration over the door. It contained room for about eight boarders, who had one sitting room in common. . . . There are not many places in London where sunset does produce such good effects as at Stepney Green. The narrow strip, so called, in shape resembles too nearly a closed umbrella or a thickish walking-stick; but there are trees in it, and beds of flowers, and seats for those who wish to sit, and walks for those who wish to walk. And the better houses of the Green—Bormalack's was on the west or dingy side—are on the east, and face the setting sun. They are of a good age, at least a hundred and fifty years old ; they are built of warm red brick, and some have doors ornamented with the old-fashioned shell, and all have an appearance of solid respectability, which makes the rest of Stepney proud of them. Here, in former days, dwelt the aristocracy of the parish ; and on this side was the house taken by Angela for her dressmaking institution, the house in which her grandfather was born. The reason why the sunsets are more splendid and the sunrises brighter at Stepney than at the opposite end of the town is that the sun sets behind the great bank of cloud which for ever lies over London town.

Now, when he rises it is naturally in the East, where there is no cloud of smoke to hide the brightness of his face.

"The Green this evening was crowded: it is not so fashionable a promenade as Whitechapel Road, but, on the other hand, it possesses the charm of comparative quiet. There is no noise of vehicles, but only the shouting of children, the loud laughter of some *gaillard* 'prentice, the coy giggle of the young lady to whom he has imparted his latest merry jape, the loud whispers of ladies who are exchanging confidences about their complaints and the complaints of their friends, and the musical laugh of girls. The old people had all crept home; the mothers were at home putting their children to bed; the fathers were mostly engaged with the evening pipe, which demands a chair within four walls and a glass of something; the Green was given up to youth; and youth was principally given up to love-making."

Angela and Harry Goslett walked on the Green; they often walked on it together; and here, and in two of the houses facing the Green—Mrs. Bormalack's, and Angela's dressmaking establishment—Angela dreamed of building that Palace of Delight which was to provide the joyless multitude with libraries, reading rooms, clubs, music rooms, a school for music, and one for dancing, something, too, in the nature of a public school, with lecturers and professors—the very Palace that she built in the book and opened on the day of her wedding; the very People's Palace that has since come into being on the Mile End Road.

At Stepney Church, an old, fourteenth-century church in the High Street, Angela married Harry Goslett, and revealed to him, after the ceremony was over, when they met a large party of friends at her newly-erected Palace of Delight, that she was

not Angela Kennedy, the mere dressmaker, but Angela Messenger, and the richest heiress in England. All about Bow Road, Mile End Road, Whitechapel Road, East India Dock Road, Limehouse Church, where Angela and Harry walked in the churchyard that is now a garden, Bethnal Green, Spitalfields —all about these and other thronged and squalid neighbourhoods of the East End, the people of *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* lived and worked and wandered, Angela sometimes, in Besant's favourite fashion, acting the cicerone and telling the others about the places they were passing through; but we have no time to follow them further and must get back to the Minories, and so to the Tower of London. The Three Nuns Tavern, across the road in Aldgate, reminds us that all about the Minories here, six centuries ago, were the gardens belonging to an Abbey of nuns. Not a vestige of the gardens remains, and though a few of the byways are reminiscent in their buildings, or their names and contour, of eighteenth and seventeenth century London, only one of them has any peculiar fascination for me, and that is Goodman's Yard, which, in the main, is the most grossly modernised of them all. It is little more than a railway goods yard now, a huge, dull brick railway building on one side of it, and a row of mean little old houses and another old Ben Jonson tavern on the other. But it draws me to step aside into it because Stow used to come this way in the sixteenth century, and hereabouts was the stile he climbed to get into Goodman's field and go to Goodman's farm, where he would refresh himself with a ha'porth of milk before he turned

to walk back home. At the end of the Minories, you are on Tower Hill, with the grey, grim, ancient Tower before you.

Quilp lived on Tower Hill; Mrs. Quilp had a view of the Tower from her front window; and you may choose for yourself which of the queer, quaint old houses that still topple along the edge of that wide sweep before the Tower is likeliest to have been his. The unhappy Florrie Holford, of Besant's *Bell of St. Paul's*, came from her lodgings in Mansell Street in an hour of black despair, and flitting out by Thames Street, "crossed Tower Hill; on her left rose up the great white Tower, now black in the night. . . . Beside the long Quay and Terrace of the Custom House, which at night is closed, there are stairs, broad stone stairs, with an iron railing running down them and a little stone landing place at the top; you reach the stairs through iron gates in the Street. In the daytime there are boatmen hanging about; survivors of the Thames watermen. By night there is no one. Great timber piles are stuck in the bed of the river just below these stairs, for the mooring of barges, and when the tide is going up or down the water rushes boiling, sucking, tearing at the timbers as if it would gladly pull them up and hurry them away far out to sea. Hither she came and here she stood looking into the water, while the voice tempted and urged her to plunge in and make an end. Only one little step: no more trouble: no more misery: no more tears: no more starvation, rags and shame. Just one step: the river, the rushing river, the kind and merciful river, the river of rest and sleep would do the rest. . . .

No one was on the stairs: after dark no one ever is on those stairs; she walked to the head of the steps, and caught the iron rail and looked over." But after a struggle with herself, she resisted the temptation, and coming back along Great Tower Hill, returned into Thames Street, and "went home crying."

Just off Great Tower Hill, in the little public garden that fringes the outside edge of the moat, is the site of that scaffold on which so many great and famous rebels, traitors and good men, were brought to the block. "Upon this hill," says Stow, "is always readily prepared, at the charges of the city, a large scaffold and gallows of timber, for the execution of such traitors and transgressors as are delivered out of the Tower, or otherwise, to the sheriffs of London by writ, there to be executed." Near by the scaffold stood the stocks, and in the last scene of Ford's tragedy of *Perkin Warbeck*, a constable and officers, followed by a rabble, bring Warbeck on to Tower Hill and fasten him in the stocks. He is urged by the King's Chaplain to confess that he is an impostor, that he is not of royal blood and has no rightful claim to the crown, but this he refuses to do, even to save his life. Presently, his wife, Lady Katherine, comes to him there with her attendants, and rebukes the Earl of Oxford, who would dissuade her from publicly acknowledging her degraded husband:

> *Katherine.* Forbear me, sir,
> And trouble not the current of my duty!—
> Oh, my lov'd lord! can any scorn be yours
> In which I have no interest? some kind hand

Lend me assistance, that I may partake
Th' infliction of this penance. My life's dearest,
Forgive me; I have staid too long from tend'ring
Attendance on reproach, yet bid me welcome.
Warbeck. Great miracle of constancy! my miseries
Were never bankrupt of their confidence
In worst afflictions, till this—now I feel them.
Report, and thy deserts, thou best of creatures,
Might to eternity have stood a pattern
For every virtuous wife, without this conquest,
Thou hast outdone belief; yet may their ruin
In after marriages be never pitied
To whom the story shall appear a fable!
Why would'st thou prove so much unkind to greatness,
To glorify thy vows by such a servitude?
I cannot weep; but, trust me, dear, my heart
Is liberal of passion; Harry Richmond,
A woman's faith hath robb'd thy fame of triumph!

Later, the sheriff and his officers arrive bringing four of Warbeck's followers, with halters about their necks, but by then he has been taken from the stocks and is being led away himself to execution:

Oxford. Look ye, behold your followers, appointed
To wait on you in death.
Warbeck. Why, peers of England,
We'll lead them on courageously; I read
A triumph over tyranny upon
Their several foreheads . . .
Death! pish! 'tis but a sound, a name of air;
A minute's storm, or not so much; to tumble
From bed to bed, be massacred alive
By some physicians, for a month or two,
In hope of freedom from a fever's torments,
Might stagger manhood; here the pain is past
Ere sensibly 'tis felt. Be men of spirit!

Spurn coward passion ! so illustrious mention
Shall blaze our names, and style us Kings o'er death.

Finally enters King Henry VII. to say the word that dismisses Warbeck to his doom. Harrison Ainsworth has a scene or two on Tower Hill, and his novel, *The Tower of London,* takes you all over the Tower itself, but most of his characters are the actual people of history, and those that are not are too unreal and make too faint an appeal to the imagination to add anything to the life or interest of the Tower. Perkin Warbeck was actual enough, of course, but Ford recreates him and makes him his own, and it is because Ainsworth could never do this that I have no clear recollection of his characters, and no inclination to re-read his books and renew my memories of the men and women of his tales. Perhaps it is impossible for fiction to add anything to the pathos, terror, tragedy and glamorous romance of real life that make the Tower the most ghastly, the most fascinating, the most precious of all the relics we have of bygone London. William the Conqueror is known to have built the beginnings of it as a menace to any rebellious spirit that might waken against him among the Londoners, but there is sufficient justification for Shakespeare's account of its origin, which is usually listed with his inaccuracies. In *Richard III.,* when Gloucester proposes to Edward, the young Prince of Wales, that "your highness shall repose you at the Tower," the Prince remarks,

I do not like the Tower, of any place ;
Did Julius Cæsar build that place, my lord ?

and Buckingham replies,

> He did, my gracious lord, begin that place,
> Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified,

the fact being that the Romans had a fort on the same site and, doubtless, when the Conqueror commenced building there he utilised what was left of it. Which was evidently Gray's idea, too, when he wrote, in *The Bard*:

> Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
> With many a foul and midnight murder fed!

So you may take it that the Tower has watched over the city since the days when London was nothing more than a collection of huts on the banks of the Thames. In its present aspect it has been a familiar landmark, watching over London, for six hundred years. Since the huddled streets and alleys, the beautiful palaces, the gardens and pleasant old houses of the middle-ages lay stretched before it, it has seen London shifting and changing, like the figures in a kaleidoscope, through Tudor, Stuart, Georgian, Victorian times, to the vast, unpicturesque but statelier city of to-day. It saw the streets in uproar during many a wild outbreak of the 'prentices; and when Jack Cade, and when Wat Tyler brought their conquering rabble swarming into them over the bridges; and when the Gordon rioters went roaring about them, burning and pillaging. It has seen the city glittering with numberless royal and civic processions; it has seen it desolated by the Great Plague, and swept by the Great Fire. All the wonderful, multi-coloured

history of London has unrolled itself round the grim walls of the Tower, and some of the blackest, most memorable events of it have happened within them. For, to say nothing of the sad multitude of its lesser victims, it has held in its cells and dungeons famous men such as Raleigh, Lord William Russell, the Earl of Essex, Sir Thomas More; Lord Nithsdale escaped from it; the little Princes were murdered in the Bloody Tower; from a window over the gateway of the Bloody Tower Archbishop Laud leaned to bless Earl Strafford as he passed below on his way to execution; in the same Tower the brutal Judge Jeffries was imprisoned; in its Bowyer Tower the Duke of Clarence was drowned in a butt of malmsey; and it has numbered Henry VI., Anne Boleyn, Queen Katherine and Lady Jane Grey among its royal prisoners; the Duke of Monmouth lay waiting execution in the White Tower, in the dungeons under which the Guy Fawkes conspirators were horribly tortured with the thumbscrews and the rack before they passed out to the scaffold. Those three Queens were beheaded on the scaffold within the Tower, the site of which is marked against the chapel of St. Peter; it was on the scaffold outside on Tower Hill that Sir Thomas More went to his death, and Strafford, Laud, Monmouth, Lord Lovat, and many another to theirs.

With all this and so much more of reality in mind, one cannot make much of the large part that the Tower has played in fiction, and I shall linger only over a few such scenes that come readiest to my recollection. Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch, in Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*, was rowed up the river to the

broad steps of the Traitor's Gate and carried a prisoner into the Tower. He was shut in the same cell that had held Lady Jane Grey, in the Beauchamp Tower, and amused himself for a while in deciphering "the names, mottoes, verses and hieroglyphics with which his predecessors in captivity had covered the walls of their prison-house:

"There he saw the names of many a forgotten sufferer mingled with others which will continue in remembrance until English history shall perish. There were the pious effusions of the devout Catholic, poured forth on the eve of his sealing his profession at Tyburn, mingled with those of the firm Protestant about to feed the fires of Smithfield. There the slender hand of the unfortunate Jane Grey, whose fate was to draw tears from future generations, might be contrasted with the bolder touch which impressed deep on the walls the Bear and Ragged Staff, the proud emblem of the proud Dudleys. It was like the roll of the prophet, a record of lamentation and mourning, and yet not unmixed with brief interjections of resignation, and sentences expressive of the firmest resolution."

You may enter the cell and read them for yourself, and I think they gain something of further interest, not from Nigel's association, but from the fact that Scott once stood here and read them, too, and went away to create Nigel and put him in this prison, and enact in it that scene with Master Heriot, the Lombard Street goldsmith, and the Fleet Street clockmaker's daughter, Margaret Ramsay. Loving Nigel in secret, she had followed him dressed as a page to warn him he was in danger of arrest, was captured and thrown into this same dungeon with him and lay exhausted on the floor with her cloak wrapped about her, till Master Heriot came and, snatching it away, revealed her identity and was

with difficulty persuaded that Nigel had not until then been aware of it.

Tom Taylor has a scene of his *'Twixt Axe and Crown*, in the Lieutenant's Lodging in the Tower, and another, a better one, in the Lieutenant's Garden. Here Sir Thomas Wyatt, condemned for fomenting rebellion against Queen Mary on behalf of the Lady Elizabeth, is

> Brought round
> By the Byward Tower and Postern to Tower Hill,

to pay the price of his treason. And again, in his historical drama of *Anne Boleyn*, Tom Taylor has his last scene in the Presence Chamber in the Tower, where Anne Boleyn bids farewell to her waiting-women and asks them to tell the King:

> For my death,
> I pray God pardon his great sin therein,
> And all my enemies, its instruments.
> And tell the King, too, he hath still been constant
> In heaping honours on this head of mine—
> From simple maid he made me Marchioness;
> From state of Marchioness raised me to Queen;
> And now he hath no higher earthly crown
> He crowns my innocence with martyrdom. . . .
> 'Twas hence I set forth for my coronation;
> All is as it was then—only a Queen
> Who goes to take a higher crown than England's.

Two scenes of Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* are inside the Tower; but no imaginative writer is so closely identified with it as Shakespeare. It is in *Richard II.* that you have Richard's Queen waiting with her Ladies in "a street leading to the Tower" to see the King, who has been deposed by Bolingbroke,

go by on his road to prison. "This way," she says:

> This way the king will come; this is the way
> To Julius Cæsar's ill-erected tower,
> To whose flint bosom my condemned lord
> Is doomed a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke,
> Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth
> Have any resting for her true king's queen;

and here presently, under the walls of the Tower, she and Richard say a last farewell to each other. Into a room of the Tower, in *Henry VI.*, Mortimer is carried by two of his gaolers, and begs them to set him down there:

> Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,
> Let dying Mortimer here rest himself,
> Even like a man new haled from the rack,
> So fare my limbs with long imprisonment;
> And these grey locks, the pursivants of death,
> Nestor-like aged, in an age of care,
> Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.

He had conspired for the crown and failed, and so had spent most of his life uselessly in prison; he has sent now for his nephew, Richard Plantagenet, who comes from the Temple to see him, is by him when he dies, and says his fitting epitaph over him:

> Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer,
> Choked with ambition of the meaner sort.

In the second part of the same play, you have the citizens gathered by the Tower, whilst Jack Cade's conquering mob overruns London, and Lord Scales appears on the walls to ask for news:

Scales. How now! Is Jack Cade slain?

First Citizen. No, my lord, nor likely to be slain; for they have won the bridge, killing all those that withstand them. The Lord Mayor craves aid of your honour from the Tower, to defend the city from the rebels.

Scales. Such aid as I can spare you shall command;
But I am troubled here with them myself;
The rebels have assayed to win the Tower.
But get you to Smithfield and gather head,
And thither I will send you Matthew Goffe:
Fight for your king, your country, and your lives.

But the play in which the Tower bulks largest is *Richard III.*, with the great scene in which Clarence is stabbed and his body haled out to be flung into the malmsey-butt; and that scene, as great and subtler, where Richard comes to join the Council sitting in the Tower, sends the Bishop of Ely away on a trivial errand—

> My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
> I do beseech you send for some of them,—

and orders the sudden arrest of one of his opponents, Lord Hastings:

> Thou art a traitor:
> Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul, I swear,
> I will not dine until I see the same,
> Lovel and Ratcliff, look that it be done:
> The rest, that love me, rise, and follow me,

and so leaves Hastings to lament his own lack of caution:

> Woe, woe, for England! not a whit for me;
> For I, too fond, might have prevented this.

Stanley did dream the boar did raze his helm ;
And I did scorn it, and disdained to fly.
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,
And startled when he looked upon the Tower,
As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house. . . .
Ratcliff. Come, come, dispatch ; the duke would be at dinner :
Make a short shrift, he longs to see your head.
Hastings. O momentary grace of mortal man,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God !

There is a scene on the Tower walls in which Gloucester and Buckingham are scheming for the murder of the young princes who stand between Gloucester and the throne ; and a scene outside the Tower in which Queen Elizabeth, the mother of the princes, comes with others, bent upon seeing them and is refused admittance, and forced at last to go away full of forebodings :

Stay yet, look back with me unto the Tower.
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes
Whom envy hath immured within your walls,
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones !
Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow
For tender princes, use my babies well.
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

Surely, as Gray said, this Tower has been the shame of London, but Time lays such a magical, transforming hand on the sins and shames and barbarisms of yesterday that it is now its glory too. The folly of those kings of ours was larger even than their crimes—that any one of them should think it worth while to waste his days in mean schemings to slaughter other kings and their children that he might wear a crown and carry a sceptre for such a

very little while—the thing is too childish for anything but pity; they were each so soon and so completely done with it. They are all gone, and nothing abides with us but the story of their brutal littleness, and the shadow of the misery, the sufferings, the heart-break of their victims, which fills the grim old Tower for ever with a whisper of tears and sighings, and clothes it with a furtive, sinister, haunted air, so that it is alienated from its human neighbourhood and looks strangely dark and cold even in the sunlight.

It is pleasant, none the less, to think how Shakespeare must have walked through its gloomy chambers and up its narrow, twisted stairways, and how it must have lured nearly all our great English writers into visiting it, from Chaucer, who lived within sight of its gaunt walls, to Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Browning (who has a scene of *Strafford* in it), and Tennyson (who has talk of it in his *Queen Mary*); and that when you go in at the gate on Great Tower Hill you are treading in their footsteps.

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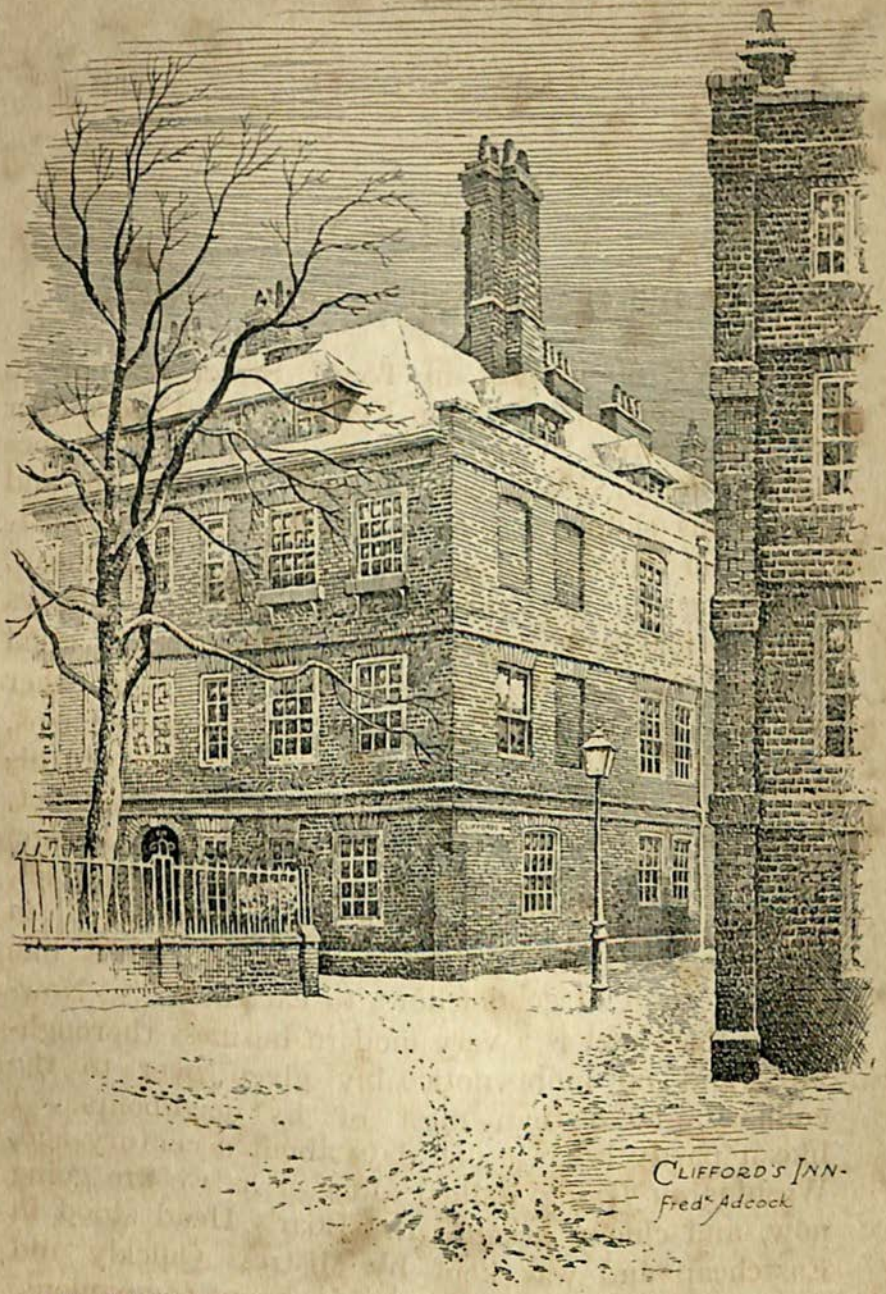
CHAPTER VII

BY THE THAMES, AND UP THE MONUMENT

I HAVE no interest in Tower Street, except to remember that "Simon Eyre, the mad shoemaker of Tower Street" lived there, and some of the scenes of Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* are laid in and about his shop; and nothing need stay us in Eastcheap till we come to the city end of it. Eastcheap, according to the invaluable Stow, "was always famous for its convivial doings. The cookes cried hot ribbes of beef roasted, pies well baked, and other victuals; there was clattering of pewter pots, harps, pipe and sawtrie;" and you find an echo of this in Dekker where, food running short at his banquet, Simon Eyre cries out to his assistants, "Firk, Hodge, lame Ralph, run, my tall men, beleaguer the shambles, beggar all Eastcheap, serve me whole oxen in chargers, and let sheep whine upon the tables like pigs for want of good fellows to eat them!" Nowadays the street is a very modern business thoroughfare, and no more noticeably given over to the culinary graces than most of its neighbours. I like it partly because one day, about a century ago, Washington Irving walked along it as we are going now, and chiefly because the Boar's Head stood in Eastcheap and was kept by Mistress Quickly and frequented by Falstaff and his boon companions.



Mr. Boffin "glanced into the mouldy little plantation, or cat preserve of Clifford's Inn, as it was that day, in search of a suggestion."

Chapter 10

Washington Irving came to look for it, but it was swept away in the Great Fire, and he saw only the already ancient house that had succeeded to its site and was tenanted by an Irish hairdresser. We shall see less of it than that, for the end of Eastcheap was cut away when King William Street was made, and the statue of that King, erected in the middle of the road, facing London Bridge, marks almost the exact spot where the Boar's Head used to stand. Wherefore this is another statue I would have taken away to some equally unsuitable position, that it might be fittingly replaced by a statue of Falstaff, with a mighty pedestal that should carry a medallion portrait of Shakespeare and be panelled with some of those immortal scenes that had the Boar's Head for their background. It was there that Falstaff told and acted to the Prince and Poins the great story of his own Homeric fighting, when he and Bardolph and Peto attacked the travellers on Gadshill; it was thence that Falstaff set forth to take charge of his command of foot, and march with the Prince to put down rebellion—but I shall not attempt any dull catalogue of all Falstaff's doings at the Boar's Head, his wit-combats with the Prince, his revellings with Bardolph, his dallyings with Doll Tearsheet, his quarrelings with Dame Quickly —all the life and talk and lusty humour that have made the inn as famous in its different fashion as the Cheapside Mermaid. If I were put to it to name the passage in Shakespeare that touches me most by its utter naturalness and the poignancy of its mingled pathos and humour I should name that which tells of the death of Falstaff. Like Falstaff

himself it is one of the greatest things in all literature, and makes me want to delay here and fancy the Boar's Head back into its place again and Bardolph, Nym and Ancient Pistol (now mine Hostess's husband) lingering on the footway before it, making ready to go and join the King's forces at Southampton with Mistress Quickly and the Boy, out there also, to see them start:

Hostess. Prithee, honey-sweet husband, let me bring thee to Staines.

Pistol. No; for my manly heart doth yearn. Bardolph, be blithe; Nym, rouse thy vaunting veins; Boy, bristle thy courage up; for Falstaff he is dead, and we must yearn therefore.

Bardolph. Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or hell!

Hostess. Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christon child; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields. 'How now, Sir John!' quoth I: 'what man! be of good cheer.' So a' cried out 'God, God, God,' three or four times: now I, to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God, I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So a' bade me lay more clothes on his feet: I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and so upward, and upward, and all was as cold as any stone.

Nym. They say he cried out of sack.

Hostess. Ay, that a' did.

Bardolph. And of women.

Hostess. Nay, that a' did not.

Boy. Yes, that a' did; and said they were devils incarnate.

Hostess. A' could never abide carnation; 'twas a colour he never liked.

Boy. A' said once, the devil would have him about women.

Hostess. A' did in some sort handle women; but then he was rheumatic, and talked of the whore of Babylon.

Boy. Do you not remember a' saw a flea stick upon Bardolph's nose, and a' said it was a black soul burning in hell-fire?

Bardolph. Well, the fuel is gone that maintained that fire: that's all the riches I got in his service.

Nym. Shall we shog? the king will be gone from Southampton.

Pistol. Come, let's away.

So they went, and are gone, and you look up, and see where they had stood, with the Boar's Head behind them, this unsatisfying statue of King William IV.

A little way westward, up Cannon Street, is London Stone, another Shakespeare association, this time a still visible one. An old, old, worn block, it is shut, for protection against vandal hands, in a casing of stone, with iron bars across the front, against the wall of St. Swithin's church. It has been there since the time of the Romans, and is supposed to have been erected by them "as a miliary, like that in the Forum at Rome, from whence all the distances were measured." The usual disputes are going on among antiquarians as to whether this was its purpose, but they do not concern us; what does concern us is that Shakespeare placed hereabouts a brief scene of the fourth act of *Henry VI.*:

SCENE VI.

London. Cannon Street.

Enter *Jack Cade* and his *Followers*. He strikes his staff on London Stone.

Cade. Now is Mortimer lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London Stone, I charge and command that, of the city's cost, the conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. And now, henceforward, it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer.

Enter *a Soldier*, running.

Soldier. Jack Cade! Jack Cade!

Cade. Knock him down there. [*They kill him.*

Smith. If this fellow be wise, he'll never call you Jack Cade more; I think he hath a very fair warning.

Dick. My lord, there is an army gathered together in Smithfield.

Cade. Come then, let's go fight with them. But first, go and set London bridge on fire, and, if you can, burn down the Tower too. Come, let's away. [*Exeunt.*

Jack Cade was not that sort of man; Shakespeare maligned him as all the historians used to; but he had the warrant of Holinshed's Chronicle for making Cade strike London Stone and declare himself Lord of the City; and whether, being roused by intolerable wrongs to lead the poor to fight for their bare rights, he was, in any case, a worse man than those kings who, in pursuit of their mean private ambitions, turned the Tower into a shambles, is a point that each of us can decide for himself.

"Come, sergeant," says Philip, in Webster's *Northward Ho!* when he is arrested in a tavern for debt, "I'll step to my uncle, not far off, in Pudding Lane, and he shall bail me." We are not going back to Pudding Lane for that or any other purpose,

but it runs into Monument Yard, just out of Eastcheap, and we are going back there for the sake of the Monument. The Great Fire broke out at the shop of the King's baker in Pudding Lane, and the Monument was built to commemorate it. Shift, the society entertainer of Foote's farce, *The Minor*, had an engagement at the house of an impossible "Mr. Deputy Sugarsops, near the Monument;" and Todgers's Commercial Boarding House, whence Mr. Pecksniff lodged was in "a kind of paved yard near the Monument," but that yard and the houses in it were demolished a few years ago, though if you wander round by Love Lane and the adjacent byways you may still see houses that were cœval with Todgers's and as like it as if they belonged to the same family. But the Monument itself, as well as Todgers's, comes into *Martin Chuzzlewit*; and the Monument is happily with us yet.

When Tom Pinch came to London, he started out one morning to walk to Furnival's Inn; with the countryman's distrust of Londoners, he would not ask to be directed, so lost his way and strayed off into Barbican, into London Wall, got somehow into Thames Street, and "found himself at last hard by the Monument.

"The Man in the Monument was quite as mysterious a being to Tom as the Man in the Moon. It immediately occurred to him that the lonely creature who held himself aloof from all mankind in that pillar, like some old hermit, was the very man of whom to ask his way. Cold he might be; little sympathy he had, perhaps, with human passion—the column seemed too tall for that; but if Truth didn't live in the base of the Monument, notwithstanding Pope's couplet about the outside of it,

where in London (Tom thought) was she likely to be found! Coming close below the pillar, it was a great encouragement to Tom to find that the Man in the Monument had simple tastes; that stony and artificial as his residence was, he still preserved some rustic recollections; that he liked plants, hung up bird-cages, was not wholly cut off from fresh groundsel, and kept young trees in tubs. The Man in the Monument himself was sitting outside the door—his own door—the Monument door: what a grand idea!—and was actually yawning, as if there were no Monument to stop his mouth and give him a perpetual interest in his own existence.

"Tom was advancing towards this remarkable creature to inquire the way to Furnival's Inn, when two people came to see the Monument. They were a gentleman and a lady; and the gentleman said, 'How much apiece?'

"The Man in the Monument replied, 'A Tanner.'

"It seemed a low expression, compared with the Monument. The gentleman put a shilling in his hand, and the Man in the Monument opened a dark little door. When the gentleman and lady had passed out of view, he shut it again, and came slowly back to his chair. He sat down and laughed.

"'They don't know what a-many steps there is!' he said. 'It's worth twice the money to stop here. Oh, my eye!'

"The man in the Monument was a Cynic; a worldly man! Tom couldn't ask his way of *him*. He was prepared to put no confidence in anything he said.

"'My Gracious!' cried a well-known voice behind Mr Pinch. 'Why, to be sure it is!'

"At the same time he was poked in the back by a parasol. Turning round to inquire into this salute, he beheld the eldest daughter of his late patron.

"'Miss Pecksniff!' said Tom.

"'Why, my Goodness, Mr Pinch!' cried Cherry. 'What are you doing here?'"

Cherry and her sister, Mercy, had fallen out with Mr. Pecksniff, for the nonce, because they suspected him of designs to marry again; the two of them

were staying in London at Todgers's, and after some demur Tom consented to accompany her to the Boarding House and have a chat with her and her sister before he resumed his search for Furnival's Inn, which makes it all the more regrettable that Todgers's should have been wiped out of existence.

Mr. Van den Bosch, grandfather of the pretty Lydia of *The Virginians*, had his house in Monument Yard; and when David Copperfield returned to England after his three years of wandering abroad, he "landed in London on a wintry autumn evening. It was dark and raining, and I saw more fog and mud in a minute than I had seen in a year. I walked from the Custom House to the Monument before I found a coach;" and as the coach took him on from the Monument he looked out of the window "and observed that an old house on Fish Street Hill, which had stood untouched by the painter, carpenter or bricklayer for a century, had been pulled down in my absence." But I know of only one novel that takes you up the Monument and gives you a scene on the top of it. This is Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee*. Luckworth Crewe is an energetic, ambitious young man of business; he has been paying attentions to Nancy Lord, but Nancy too is ambitious and in no hurry to give herself to any man all for love, and has held him off discreetly. She had once taken a walk with him, and at length he reminds her that she had promised him another. He mentions that he recently took some friends up the Monument and St. Paul's; she remarks that she has never seen the Monument, and is brought to consent to meet him next afternoon at the north end of London Bridge. They meet there,

and after some talk he says he will take her to see his business premises in Farringdon Street.

"'We'll walk round when we've been up the Monument. You don't often go about the City, I daresay. Nothing doing, of course, on a Saturday afternoon.'

"Nancy made him moderate his pace, which was too quick for her. . . .

"'I shall live in a big way,' Crewe continued, as they walked on towards Fish Street Hill. 'Not for the swagger of it; I don't care about that, but because I've a taste for luxury. I shall have a country house, and keep good horses. And I should like to have a little farm of my own, a model farm; make my own butter and cheese, and know that I ate the real thing. I shall buy pictures. Haven't I told you I like pictures? Oh, yes. I shall go round among the artists, and encourage talent that hasn't made itself known.'

"'Can you recognise it?' asked Nancy.

"'Well, I shall learn to. And I shall have my wife's portrait painted by some first-rate chap, never mind what it costs, and hung in the Academy. That's a great idea of mine—to see my wife's portrait in the Academy. . . . Well, here we are. People used to be fond of going up there, they say, just to pitch themselves down. A good deal of needless trouble, it seems to me. Perhaps they gave themselves the off-chance of changing their minds before they got to the top.'

"'Or wanted to see if life looked any better from up there,' suggested Nancy.

"'Or hoped somebody would catch them by the coat-tails, and settle a pension on them out of pity.'

"Thus jesting they began the ascent. Crewe, whose spirits were at high pressure, talked all the way up the winding stairs; on issuing into daylight, he became silent, and they stood side by side, mute, before the vision of London's immensity. Nancy began to move round the platform. The strong west wind lashed her cheeks to a glowing colour; excitement added brilliancy to her eyes. As soon as they had recovered from the first impression, this spectacle of a world's wonder served only

to exhilarate her; she was not awed by what she looked upon. In her conceit of self-importance, she stood there, above the battling millions of men, proof against mystery and dread, untouched by the voices of the past, and in the present seeing only common things, though from an odd point of view. Here her senses seemed to make the literal assumption by which her mind had always been directed: that she—Nancy Lord—was the mid point of the universe. No humility awoke in her; she felt the stirring of envies, avidities, unavowable passions, and let them flourish unrebuked.

"Crewe had his eyes fixed upon her; his lips parted hungrily.

"'Now *that's* how I should like to see you painted,' he said all at once. 'Just like that! I never saw you looking so well. I believe you're the most beautiful girl to be found anywhere in this London.'

"There was genuine emotion in his voice, and his sweeping gesture suited the mood of her vehemence. Nancy, having seen that the two or three other people on the platform were not within hearing, gave an answer of which the frankness surprised even herself.

"'Portraits for the Academy cost a good deal, you know.'

"'I know. But that's what I'm working for. There are not many men down yonder,' he pointed over the City, 'have a better head for money-making than I have.'

"'Well, prove it,' replied Nancy, and laughed as the wind caught her breath.

"'How long will you give me?'

"She made no answer, but walked to the side whence she could look westward. Crewe followed close, his features set still in the hungry look, his eyes never moving from her warm cheek and full lips.

"'What it must be,' she said, 'to have twenty thousand a year!'

"The man of business gave a gasp. In the same moment he had to clutch at his hat, lest it should be blown away.

"'Twenty thousand a year?' he echoed. 'Well, it isn't impossible. Men get beyond that, and a good deal beyond it. But it's a large order.'

"'Of course it is. But what was it you said? The most beautiful girl in all London? That's a large order, too, is'nt it? How much is she worth?'

"'You're talking for the joke now,' said Crewe. 'I don't like to hear that kind of thing, either. You never think in that way.'

"'My thoughts are my own. I may think as I choose.'

"'Yes. But you have thoughts above money.'

"'Have I? How kind of you to say so.—I've had enough of this wind; we'll go down.'

"She led the way, and neither of them spoke till they were in the street again. Nancy felt her hair.

"'Am I blown to pieces?' she asked.

"'No, no; you're all right. Now, will you walk through the City?'

"'Where's the place you spoke of?'

"'Farringdon Street. That'll bring you round to Blackfriars Bridge, when you want to go home. But there's plenty of time yet.'"

Fish Street Hill slopes down into Lower Thames Street, and leftward lie Billingsgate Market, and beyond it the Custom House, at which young Scatterall, in Trollope's *Three Clerks*, yearned to secure an appointment because "one does get such stunning feeds for tenpence at that place in Thames Street"—the Custom House from which David Copperfield walked to the Monument, and to the steps of which Cowper once went with the intention of committing suicide, but was baulked by the sight of a porter sitting on some goods there, and went back to the coach he had left at the eastern end of Thames Street, by Tower wharf. Billingsgate, as a synonym for bad language, has been strewn up and down English literature for centuries past. Morose, in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, recalling the most unpleasant places

of his acquaintance, swears that if only it would enable him to get rid of his wife he would do penance "in a belfry, at Westminster Hall, the Tower wharf—what place is there else?—London Bridge, Paris Garden, Billingsgate, when the noises are at their height, and loudest." Olivia, in Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*, speaking of the surly, honest, Manly, a sea-captain, cries scornfully, "Foh! I hate a lover that smells like Thames Street." You see Major Dobbin at his father's warehouse down Thames Street, in *Vanity Fair*; James Gann, of *A Shabby-Genteel Story*, married and set up housekeeping in the same street; and it was on a Thames Street wharf that Walter Gay first met Florence Dombey.

When Mr. Simon Tappertit, of *Barnaby Rudge*, called on Mr. Chester, at his chambers in the Temple, he was carrying a great lock which he was on his way to fit "on a ware'us door in Thames Street." Mrs. Nickleby lived in Thames Street, and Newman Noggs drove her and Kate Nickleby there in a coach when they first went to take possession of the house—

> "a large old dingy house in Thames Street, the door and windows of which were so bespattered with mud that it would appear to have been uninhabited for years. . . . Old and gloomy and black in truth it was, and sullen and dark were the rooms once so bustling with life and enterprise. There was a wharf behind, opening on the Thames. An empty dog-kennel, some bones of animals, fragments of iron hoops, and staves of old casks lay strewn about but no life was stirring there. It was a picture of cold, silent decay."

In Thames Street, too, lived Mrs. Clennam, with Mr. Flintwich and his wife Affery, in "an old brick house, so dingy as to be almost black." Little Dorrit

used to come along Thames Street to it, and Arthur Clennam, and the rascally Rigaud; but it is no use looking for it; it was a "debilitated old house," standing propped on huge crutches, and I need not remind you that it collapsed into ruins before the story ended. Althea, of *The Bell of St. Paul's*, who had a passion for London's relics of the past and pandered to Besant's weakness for making certain of his novels very guide-booky, came over from Bankside one Saturday afternoon with Laurence Waller, bent on showing him round, "all through one afternoon, from west to east, from Puddle Dock to Tower Hill, from one end to the other of Thames Street.

"It was an ambitious programme, because the history of London might almost be written in Thames Street alone. . . . One would rather walk down Thames Street than the High of Oxford, or the Cannebiere of Marseilles, or the Rue St. Honore. The modern warehouses are not in the least picturesque, yet the names which remain carry the memory back; the succession of churches, though broken here and there by the havoc of modern barbarians, marks the piety of London merchants; the narrow courts still lead to the old stairs, and the two ancient ports of Queenhithe and Billingsgate can still be seen. . . .

"'You are going to teach me more history,' said Laurence. 'Shall we become ghosts once more?'

"'If you like,' she replied. 'But there is a great deal more history here than I can teach you in a single afternoon. Come.'

"Then she began to talk. London began in Thames Street, where two little hillocks with a brook between rose above the river, on either side a swamp. When the hillocks were quite built upon and still there was not room enough for the trade which continued to grow, they built a river wall and more houses behind it; and then they constructed their two ports, and as they grew richer they began to build stately houses upon the river wall: at one end Baynard's Castle" (where Shakespeare

puts one of the scenes of *Richard III*), " and at the other the Tower: in the midst Cold Harbour " (Middleton has a scene of *A Trick to Catch the Old One* there) " and the King's Steelyard. Here lived the Hanse merchants: here were the Halls of the City Companies: in the streets leading up the hill at the back stood many a noble mansion in its courtyard, full of precious carvings, rich tapestry, and caskets from foreign parts: along the streets was a succession of noble churches, each with its monuments and tombs, its vaults and its churchyards filled with the bones of dead citizens."

She showed Laurence the port of Queenhithe, " which still preserves its ancient form though the buildings round it are modern; " and " when they were as yet no more than half way down the street . . . Althea stopped at the corner of a street leading north. A little way up the street was a church Tower set a little way back, and, projecting from its face, a great clock reaching halfway across the street, with a curious little figure upon it." This street must have been Garlick Hill, and the church St. James Garlickhithe, for it answers the description accurately, and the figure standing on its clock is that of the Apostle. Althea's Aunt Cornelia was pew-opener and caretaker at that church; they went in and interrupted a quarrel Aunt Cornelia was having with her assistant, and spent so much time in going over the building with them and seeing its curiosities, that they came out disinclined to walk any further that day in Thames Street.

Near by is Paul's Wharf, and against Paul's Wharf the hero of *The Fortunes of Nigel* lodged with John Christie, the ship-chandler, at the end of a narrow lane in a house that looked out upon the river. But after

all, if I am to confess the truth, the chief charm of Thames Street centres, not in any of these imaginary people, but in two men who once walked it in the flesh. Chaucer, whose pen "moved over bills of lading" on one of the busy wharves hereabouts, is said to have been born in Thames Street, by Dowgate Hill, and in or near Dowgate Robert Greene, from whom Shakespeare took some of his plots, spent his latter days and died, and few stories in the history of English literature are more tragically pathetic than that of Greene's death. He lay miserably penniless, ill and dying at the house of a poor shoemaker there; he gave his host some sort of promissory note for ten pounds that he owed him and wrote under it an appeal to the wife he had forsaken: "Doll, I charge thee by the love of our youth and my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paide; for if hee and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streetes." It was false sentiment, I know, yet there is something oddly touching in the record that his kindly hostess "crowned his dead body with a garland of bays," even though it is said that he had asked her to pay this honour to his remains.

CHAPTER VIII

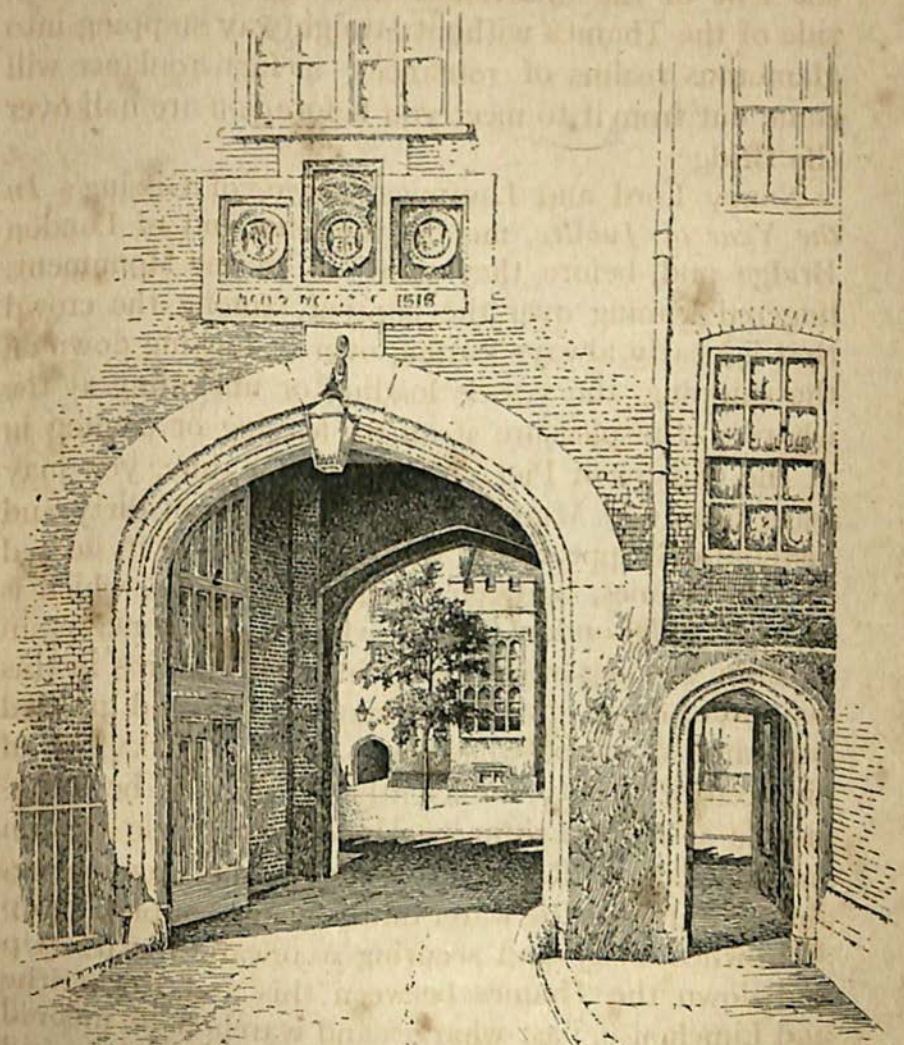
SOUTH OF THE THAMES

IT would be easy to say hard things about South London: about the slums and squalor of Southwark, Bermondsey and Lambeth; the drab monotony of the streets of Battersea and Kennington; the smug respectability and petty suburban spirit that preside over Brixton and Clapham; the arcadian affectations of Tooting and Streatham. All this and more to the same purpose has been said often enough, but it is not all the truth, nor even all true. Snobs gravitate towards the snob; unto the dull all things are dull, except their own doings, every place dull that does not live the little life that pleases them; and the suburban-minded find or make a suburb wherever they go. Each of us, Atlas-like, carries his own world about with him, and to the man who carries a world that is large enough, and full enough, no suburb is ever suburban, the dullest place is alive with interest, and snobbery either does not exist, or exists simply for his private amusement. Good things come out of Nazareth, and there are plenty of good things in it, if you have eyes to see them; otherwise Swinburne could not have lived most of his days at Putney, and Blake could not have strolled on Peckham Rye and seen angels in the trees there.

Go over any one of the Bridges, and you cannot

set foot in the unloveliest district on the southern side of the Thames without straightway stepping into glamorous realms of romance; in fact, romance will come out from it to meet you before you are half over the Bridge.

Nancy Lord and Laurence Crewe, of Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee,* met at the City end of London Bridge and, before they went on to the Monument, lingered leaning over the parapet, among the crowd that is nearly always leaning over it, looking down on the shipping, the vessels loading or unloading at the wharves, the pleasure steamers leaving or coming in at the Old Swan Pier. Once upon a time, you may learn from *Our Mutual Friend,* "a boat of dirty and disreputable appearance, with two figures in it, floated on the Thames, between Southwark Bridge, which is of iron, and London Bridge, which is of stone, as an autumn evening was closing in. The figures in this boat were those of a strong man with ragged grizzled hair and a sunbrowned face, and a dark girl of nineteen or twenty, sufficiently like him to be recognisable as his daughter." These were Lizzie Hexam and her father, Rogue Riderhood; she was rowing, and he watching the water on the chance of picking up a drowned body and securing a reward for it. Up and down the Thames between this and Rotherithe and Limehouse, past wharves and warehouses, moored ships and barges, and the crazy, toppling old inns and huts and frowsy residences that line the two muddy banks of the river, was his regular nightly beat on that gruesome search. Little Dorrit, when she lodged with her father in the Marshalsea, used to come over London Bridge to her sewing-work at Mrs. Clennam's



LINCOLN'S INN GATEWAY
CHANCERY LANE
Fred^k Adcock

"We passed into sudden quietude under an old gateway" so Esther, in "Bleak House," describes her arrival here in a cab along Chancery Lane.

Chapter 10

in Thames Street, and went home that way warily, for fear anyone should follow her and discover where she lived: "This was the life and this the history of Little Dorrit; turning at the end of London Bridge, recrossing it, going back again, passing on to St. George's Church, turning back suddenly once more, and flitting in at the open gate and little courtyard of the Marshalsea."

David Copperfield passed, with Mr. Mell, over London Bridge on his way to Mr. Creakle's school. In one of the *Sketches by Boz* Dickens describes how the steamers start from the Old Swan Pier on the run to Gravesend and Margate; and in another he tells you how the Tuggs's, who kept a grocer's shop, "in a narrow street on the Surrey side of the water within three minutes walk of the old London Bridge," made the voyage to Ramsgate to celebrate their coming into an inheritance of twenty thousand pounds. London Bridge is the scene, too, of a memorable chapter of *Oliver Twist*. Nancy came here one midnight, shadowed by the disguised Noah Claypole, whom Fagin had set to spy upon her, to meet Mr. Browlow and Rose Maylie and disclose to them, in the interests of Oliver, some of the secrets of her associates:

"The church clocks chimed three quarters past eleven, as two figures emerged on London Bridge. One, which advanced with a swift and rapid step, was that of a woman, who looked eagerly about her as though in quest of some expected object; the other figure was that of a man, who slunk along in the deepest shadow he could find, and at some distance, accommodating his pace to hers. . . . Thus they crossed the Bridge from Middlesex to the Surrey shore: when the woman, apparently

disappointed in her anxious scrutiny of the foot-passengers, turned back. The movement was sudden; but he who watched her was not thrown off his guard by it; for shrinking into one of the recesses which surmount the piers of the Bridge, and leaning over the parapet the better to conceal his figure, he suffered her to pass by on the opposite pavement. . . . It was a very dark night. . . . A mist hung over the river, deepening the red glare of the fires that burnt upon the small craft moored off the different wharves, and rendering darker and more indistinct the mirkier buildings on the banks. The old smoke-stained storehouses on either side rose heavy and dull from the dense mass of roofs and gables and frowned sternly upon water too black to reflect even their lumbering shapes. The tower of old St. Saviour's Church, and the spire of Saint Magnus, so long the giant warders of the ancient bridge, were visible in the gloom; but the forest of shipping below bridge, and the thickly scattered spires of churches above, were nearly all hidden in the night. The girl had taken a few restless turns to and fro—closely watched meanwhile by her hidden observer—when the heavy bell of St. Paul's tolled for the death of another day. Midnight had come upon the crowded city. . . . The hour had not struck two minutes when a young lady, accompanied by a grey-haired gentleman, alighted from a hackney carriage within a short distance of the bridge and, having dismissed the vehicle, walked straight towards it. They had scarcely set foot upon its pavement when the girl started, and immediately made towards them. They walked onward, looking about them with the air of persons who entertained some very slight expectation which had little chance of being realised, when they were suddenly joined by this new associate. They halted with an exclamation of surprise, but suppressed it immediately; for a man in the garments of a countryman came close up—brushed against them, indeed—at that precise moment.

"'Not here,' said Nancy hurriedly, 'I'm afraid to speak to you here. Come away—out of the public road—down the steps yonder!'

"As she uttered these words and indicated, with her hand,

the direction in which she wished them to proceed, the countryman looked round, and roughly asking what they took up the whole pavement for, passed on. The steps to which the girl had pointed were those which, on the Surrey bank and on the same side of the bridge as Saint Saviour's Church, form a landing-stairs from the river. To this spot the man bearing the appearance of a countryman hastened unobserved; and after a moment's survey of the place he began to descend. These stairs are a part of the bridge; they consist of three flights. Just below the end of the second, going down, the stone wall on the left terminates in an ornamental pilaster facing towards the Thames. At this point the lower steps widen: so that a person turning that angle of the wall is necessarily unseen by any others on the stairs who chance to be above him, if only a step. The countryman looked hastily round when he reached this point; and as there seemed no better place of concealment and, the tide being out, there was plenty of room, he slipped aside, with his back to the pilaster, and there waited."

Nancy, Mr. Brownlow and Rose Maylie presently came down the steps, and paused here, beyond hearing from above, whilst Nancy made her disclosures; Noah Claypole, crouched behind the pilaster, overheard, and when they had gone, Rose and Mr. Brownlow first, and Nancy after an interval, he hurried back to Fagin with his report. Sikes being told, believed she had betrayed the whole gang, and in the madness of his rage, murdered Nancy and fled.

If you cross the road to the eastern side of the bridge and look down on Rotherithe, over the parapet, you may see Jacob's Island with the grimy, ancient house upon it to which Sikes came when the police were hot on his track, and from the roof of which, while the mob was helping the officers to batter in the door and capture him, Sikes, planning

desperately to escape by lowering himself behind the house into the deserted ditch which the incoming tide was filling, slipped and fell, and, the noose in the rope catching round his neck, was hanged. On a certain dark night, Barnaby Rudge's villainous father " crossed London Bridge and passed into Southwark," where, in a bye-street he came upon the unhappy wife who lived in fear of his finding her, furtively tracked her to her home; and having terrified her with threats and got food and money from her, came gliding back across the bridge and " plunged into the backways, lanes and courts between Cornhill and Smithfield."

Immediately you are well over the Bridge, you have on the left London Bridge Station, to which Pendennis, Warrington and Fred Bayham went one morning " at an early hour proposing to breathe the fresh air of Greenwich Park before dinner. And at London Bridge, by the most singular coincidence, Lady Kew's carriage drove up to the Brighton entrance, and Miss Ethel and her maid stepped out of the brougham." On the right, facing the railway-station approach, is St. Saviour's, Southwark, lately renamed, and now known as Southwark Cathedral. Shakespeare's brother, Edmund, Fletcher, the dramatist, and Massinger are buried in it, but their graves are not marked, and the most interesting of its many ancient tombs is that of Chaucer's contemporary, Gower, with a painted effigy of the poet lying upon it, his head pillowed on his books. Behind Southwark Cathedral is a wide, long tract known as Bankside; it stretches as far as to Southwark Bridge, and beyond that nearly to Westminster. On the part between London

and Southwark Bridges stood the Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare's and Ben Jonson's plays were produced and Shakespeare was actor-manager. The site of it is occupied now by Barclay and Perkins's Brewery, and Barclay and Perkins were successors to that Mr. Thrale who was the friend of Dr. Johnson.

But we keep straight on down the Borough High Street, and in due course come to a remnant of Lant Street, where Dickens lodged when he was a boy, whilst his father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea and where, if you have read *Pickwick*, you know that Bob Sawyer, that dashing medical student, had apartments :

"There is a repose about Lant Street, in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul. There are always a good many houses to let in the street; it is a bye-street, too, and its dulness is soothing. . . . If a man wished to abstract himself from the world; to remove himself from within the reach of temptation; to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of the window, we should recommend him by all means to go to Lant Street. . . . The chief features in the still life of the street are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates and bell-handles. . . . The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night."

The house where Dickens lodged, and where Bob Sawyer was living when he gave his famous party, is gone; the street is "near to Guy's," said Mr. Sawyer, "and handy for me, you know." And close by, in St. Thomas Street, is Guy's, which Keats walked when he was studying surgery.

The most famous of the many Inns in the Boro' High Street is the Tabard, which has inherited the site of that Inn from which the pilgrims used to set

out on their journeys to Canterbury, as they set out from it one April day in the fourteenth century when Chaucer was one of them :

> Byfel that, in that season on a day,
> In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
> Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
> To Canterbury with ful devout corage,
> At night was come into that hostelrie
> Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
> Of sondry folk, by aventure i-falle
> In felawschipe, and pilgryms were they alle,
> That toward Canturbury wolden ryde.

He introduces us to all the company, and they have been riding to Canterbury ever since ; and as surely as Chaucer was the father of English poetry, that immortal Inn was its birthplace.

Shakespeare has a scene of *Henry VI* in Southwark, where Cade and his rebels parley with Buckingham and the King's forces ; and at another Inn, the White Hart, there, whose yard still remains, Jack Cade took up his head-quarters. The Inn is replaced by an ugly building which appropriately houses " The Sam Weller Social Club " for it was in the yard of the White Hart that Mr. Pickwick first encountered Sam Weller :

" There are in London several old inns, once the headquarters of celebrated coaches in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times ; but which have degenerated into little more than the abiding and booking places of country wagons. . . . In the Borough especially, there still remain some half dozen old inns which have preserved their external features unchanged. . . . It was in the yard of one of these inns—of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart—that a man was

busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots. . . . He was habited in a coarse-striped waistcoat with black calico sleeves and blue glass buttons; drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction."

This was Sam Weller, and thus Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Wardle and Mr. Perker found him. They arrived in pursuit of Mr. Jingle who had eloped with Rachel Wardle, and the runaways were staying at the White Hart, Mr. Jingle being, at that moment, on his way back there from Doctor's Commons with a special licence in his pocket. If you step aside up George Yard, which is next to White Hart Yard, you may see the Old George Inn which with its low ceilings, ancient rafters and old wooden galleries outside closely resembles what the White Hart used to be and gives you an idea of the old Inn yards in which the strolling players of Shakespeare's time used to set up their stages.

Over the road, from the White Hart, stood the King's Bench Prison, to which the officers brought Mr. Micawber from Windsor Terrace; but a more famous debtor's prison, the Marshalsea, stood farther down the High Street, on the left, its side windows overlooking the churchyard of St. George's, which thrusts itself out from the level of the houses here and bars half the roadway. Dickens's father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea, and Dickens as a boy came often down from his lodging in Lant Street and

was in and out visiting him. But the Marshalsea is famous chiefly because its shadow overlies all the story of *Little Dorrit*. The place might almost be rebuilt from Dickens's descriptions, but there is no use in repeating them for it is all gone—or nearly all. Several years ago I went up Angel Court, which opens from the Borough High Street a little before you get to the church, and saw the last fragments that Dickens tells you, in a preface dated May 1857, were all that remained of the Marshalsea in his latter days:

"Some of my readers may have an interest in being informed whether or no any portions of the Marshalsea Prison are yet standing. I did not know myself until the sixth of this present month, when I went to look. I found the outer front court-yard, often mentioned in this story, metamorphosed into a butter-shop; and I then almost gave up every brick of the jail for lost. Wandering, however, down a certain adjacent 'Angel Court, leading to Bermondsey,' I came to Marshalsea Place; the houses in which I recognised not only as the great block of the former prison, but as preserving the rooms that arose in my mind's eye when I became Little Dorrit's biographer. The smallest boy I ever conversed with, carrying the largest baby I ever saw, offered a supernaturally intelligent explanation of the locality in its old uses, and was very nearly correct. . . . I pointed to the room where Little Dorrit was born, and where her father lived so long, and asked him what was the name of the lodger who tenanted that apartment at present? He said 'Tom Pythick.' I asked him who was Tom Pythick? and he said, 'Joe Pythick's uncle.' A little further on I found the older and smaller wall which used to enclose the pent-up inner prison where nobody was put except for ceremony. But, whosoever goes into Marshalsea Place, turning out of Angel Court, leading to Bermondsey, will find his feet on the very paving-stones of the extinct Marshalsea jail; will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left, very little altered if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free;

will look upon the rooms in which the debtors lived, and will stand among the crowding ghosts of many miserable years."

Angel Court is still there; it no longer leads to Bermondsey, for it has been cut short and blocked in, but it still keeps a few of those sad old houses that Dickens identified.

If the Marshalsea with all its memories of Little Dorrit and her family, and of Arthur Clennam, Plornish, Mr. Panks, and the rest of those who visited them there, is vanished, St. George's Church survives unaltered; it is much as it was in the eighteenth century when young William Halliday of Besant's *Orange Girl,* cast off by his family, was its organist; and you must not pass it without going in and seeing the vestry. There was a night, you know, when Little Dorrit and Maggy got back to the Marshalsea too late; the gates were closed and there was nothing for it but for them to walk about the streets until they were opened again next morning:

"They went back again to the gate, intending to wait there now until it should be opened; but the air was so raw and cold that Little Dorrit, leading Maggy about in her sleep, kept in motion. Going round by the church, she saw lights there, and the door open, and went up the steps and looked in.

"'Who's that?' cried a stout man, who was putting on a nightcap as if he were going to bed in a vault.

"'It's no one particular, sir,' said Little Dorrit.

"'Stop!' cried the man. 'Let's have a look at you!'

"This caused her to turn back, in the act of going out, and to present herself and her charge before him.

"'I thought so,' said he. 'I know *you.*'

"'We have often seen each other,' said Little Dorrit, recognising the sexton, or the beadle, or the verger, or whatever he was, 'when I have been at church here.'

"'More than that, we've got your birth in our Register, you know; you're one of our curiosities.'

"'Indeed?' said Little Dorrit.

"'To be sure. As the child of the—by-the-bye, how did you get out so early?'

"'We were shut out last night, and are waiting to get in.'

"'You don't mean it? And there's another hour good yet! Come into the vestry. You'll find a fire in the vestry on account of the painters. I'm waiting for the painters, or I shouldn't be here, you may depend upon it. One of our curiosities mustn't be cold, when we have it in our power to warm her up comfortable. Come along.'

"He was a very good old fellow in his familiar way; and having stirred the vestry fire, he looked round the shelves of registers for a particular volume. 'Here you are, you see,' he said, taking it down and turning the leaves. 'Here you'll find yourself, as large as life. Amy, daughter of William and Fanny Dorrit. Born, Marshalsea Prison, Parish of St. George. And we tell people that you have lived there without so much as a day's or a night's absence ever since. Is it true?'

"'Quite true, till last night.'

"'Lord!' But his surveying her with an admiring gaze suggested something else to him, to wit: 'I am sorry to see, though, that you are faint and tired. Stay a bit. I'll get some cushions out of the church, and you and your friend shall lie down before the fire. Don't be afraid of not going in to join your father when the gate opens. *I'll* call you.' He soon brought in the cushions, and strewed them on the ground. 'There you are, you see. Again as large as life. Oh, never mind thanking. I've daughters of my own. And though they weren't born in the Marshalsea Prison, they might have been, if I had been, in my ways of carrying on, of your father's breed. Stop a bit. I must put something under the cushion for your head. Here's a burial volume. Just the thing! We have got Mrs. Bangham in this book. But what makes these books interesting to most people is—not who's in 'em, but who isn't—who's coming, you know, and when. That's the interesting question.'

"Commendingly looking back at the pillow he had improvised, he left them to their hour's repose. Maggy was snoring already, and Little Dorrit was soon fast asleep, with her head resting on that sealed book of Fate, untroubled by its mysterious blank leaves."

Just past the church is Horsemonger Lane, which reminds you that Little Dorrit had a ridiculously impossible lover in Young John Chivery the son of a non-resident turnkey, and he "assisted his mother in the conduct of a snug tobacco business round the corner of Horsemonger Lane. . . . The tobacco business round the corner of Horsemonger Lane was carried on in a rural establishment one story high, which had the benefit of the air from the yards of Horsemonger Lane Jail, and the advantage of a retired walk under the wall of that pleasant establishment. The business was of too modest a character to support a life-size Highlander, but it maintained a little one on a bracket on the doorpost, who looked like a fallen Cherub that had found it necessary to take to a kilt." It is the same dingy, unwholesome, disreputable thoroughfare as ever, though it is now disguised as Long Lane; moreover, you can get to it without passing the church, because a road has been cut to it through the churchyard; and whenever Young John lost hope, and when Little Dorrit told him gently he must give up hoping altogether, he found comfort in imagining himself dead and in composing an affecting inscription to go on his tombstone in St. George's Churchyard, the severed portion of which is now a garden.

Dickens is all about this neighbourhood. To the right, along Marshalsea Road, is the Farmhouse, still

a common lodging-house, as it was when he went over it one day with Inspector Field, and the sketch he gives of it remains accurate. "It is the old Manor House of these parts and stood in the country once. . . . This long, paved yard was a garden or a paddock once, or a court in front of the Farm House. Perchance, with a dovecot in the centre, and fowls pecking about—with fair elm trees, then, where discoloured chimney-stacks and gables are now—noisy, then, with rooks which have yielded to a different sort of rookery. It is likelier than not, Inspector Field thinks, as we turn into the common kitchen, which is in the yard and many paces from the house." When I visited the Farmhouse it was to see a pedlar-poet who was dossing there for fourpence a night and has since risen to distinction and received a Civil List Pension. I went alone, for it is orderly and law-abiding now, but in Dickens's time it swarmed with sinister and dangerous characters, and was not to be visited safely unless you were accompanied by a police officer.

Farther south lies Camberwell Green, and beyond that lived Wemmick with his father at the small house they called the Castle. On an important day when Pip called on him, he and Pip came out for a walk: "We went towards Camberwell Green, and when we were thereabouts, Wemmick said suddenly, 'Hallo! Here's a church!'" and added, as if he were animated by a brilliant idea, "Let's go in!" There by the Green is the church, and who will may go in it. Inside, they beheld his father, "the Aged," entering by a side door escorting Miss Skiffins; and producing and putting on a pair of white kid gloves, Wemmick exclaimed, in the same casual fashion.

"Hallo! Here's Miss Skiffins. Let's have a wedding." The clerk and clergyman appeared, Wemmick found a ring in his pocket, and, to Pip's amazement, was duly married.

Nancy Lord, of Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee*, lived in Grove Lane, Camberwell, "a long acclivity which starts from Camberwell Green and, after passing a few mean shops, becomes a road of suburban dwellings;" and from Camberwell Green Nancy Lord and her brother, Miss Morgan and Samuel Barmby took a Westminster tram on their way to Charing Cross to see the illuminations in the London streets on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Samuel Barmby, by the way, lived in Coldharbour Lane, which is close to Camberwell Green, until he became a partner in Mr. Lord's business, when he removed to the more respectable Dagmar Street, not far from Grove Lane.

Beyond Camberwell lies Brixton, and west of it is Kennington: Osmond Waymark, in Gissing's *Unclassed*, was teacher in a school at Brixton, and had lodgings in Walcot Square, Kennington; and Kennington—Kennington Road particularly—and Battersea Park, which is still farther west, supplied the background for many of Gissing's scenes in *The Unclassed*, *The Town Traveller*, *Thyrza*, and the story of "Our Mr. Jupp," in *Human Odds and Ends*. Mr. Gammon, the town traveller, lodged with Mrs Bubb in Kennington Road; and you may follow the course he took that day when he walked down Kennington Road "at a leisurely pace, smiting his leg with his doubled dog-whip, and looking about him with his usual wide-awake, contented air," till on reaching the end of Upper Kennington Lane he struck towards Vauxhall

Station, and "a short railway journey and another pleasant saunter brought him to a china shop, off Battersea Park Road, over which stood the name of Clover;" where Mrs. Clover lived with that mysterious husband of whom we have already seen something in Old Jewry. Vauxhall Station reminds you that round about here were the gardens of that name which, to say nothing of the actual public, were frequented by all manner of people out of the Restoration Comedies; by Fanny Burney's *Evelina* and her friends; Pendennis went there with Fanny Bolton and her mother, wife and daughter of the gatekeeper of Shepherd's Inn; Dickens pictures "Vauxhall Gardens by Day," in the *Sketches by Boz*; but they have been cut up into streets, and rows of plain, innocent suburban houses have been built over them. Minnie Clover, daughter of the china-shop people, was employed at Doulton's potteries, which you may see in the Vauxhall neighbourhood. Polly Sparkes, whom you saw with Christopher Parish at Liverpool Street Station, used to sell programmes at a theatre: you may stroll with her in Battersea Park, and then go back outside the bus with her to Kennington Road, where she also lodged at Mrs. Bubbs's. Along Kennington Road she and Christopher walked many times together, before that meeting at Liverpool Street Station, when she promised at last to marry him; and in Kennington Road, Lydia Trent, of Gissing's *Thyrza*, met Luke Acroyd, and they walked aside into the quieter Walcot Square, whilst he told her how the scandalmongers were saying that her sister, Thyrza, went too often to see the wealthy young Mr. Egremont at the library he was forming

and intending to open for the benefit of the neighbourhood.

All Lambeth is thick with memories of *Thyrza*. Lydia and Thyrza lodged there, in Walnut Tree Walk, which turns out of Lambeth Walk :

" For the most part it consists of old dwellings, which probably were the houses of people above the working class in days when Lambeth's squalor was confined within narrower limits. The doors are framed with dark wood, and have hanging porches. At the end of the street is a glimpse of trees growing in Kennington Road."

In one of these houses lived Thyrza and Lydia in a top front room. There is a vivid little scene in which Lydia and Mary Bower, who had called for her, come from the house on the way to chapel, and at the Kennington Road corner of Walnut Tree Walk meet Acroyd, and Lydia lingers to tell him that her sister is not coming out that night, and tries to make him realise that Thyrza has no love for him. Gilbert Grail and his mother lodged in the same Walnut Tree Walk house, and you have Gilbert coming out one evening and going into Lambeth Walk where " the market of Christmas Eve was flaring and clamorous ; the odours of burning naphtha and fried fish were pungent on the wind :

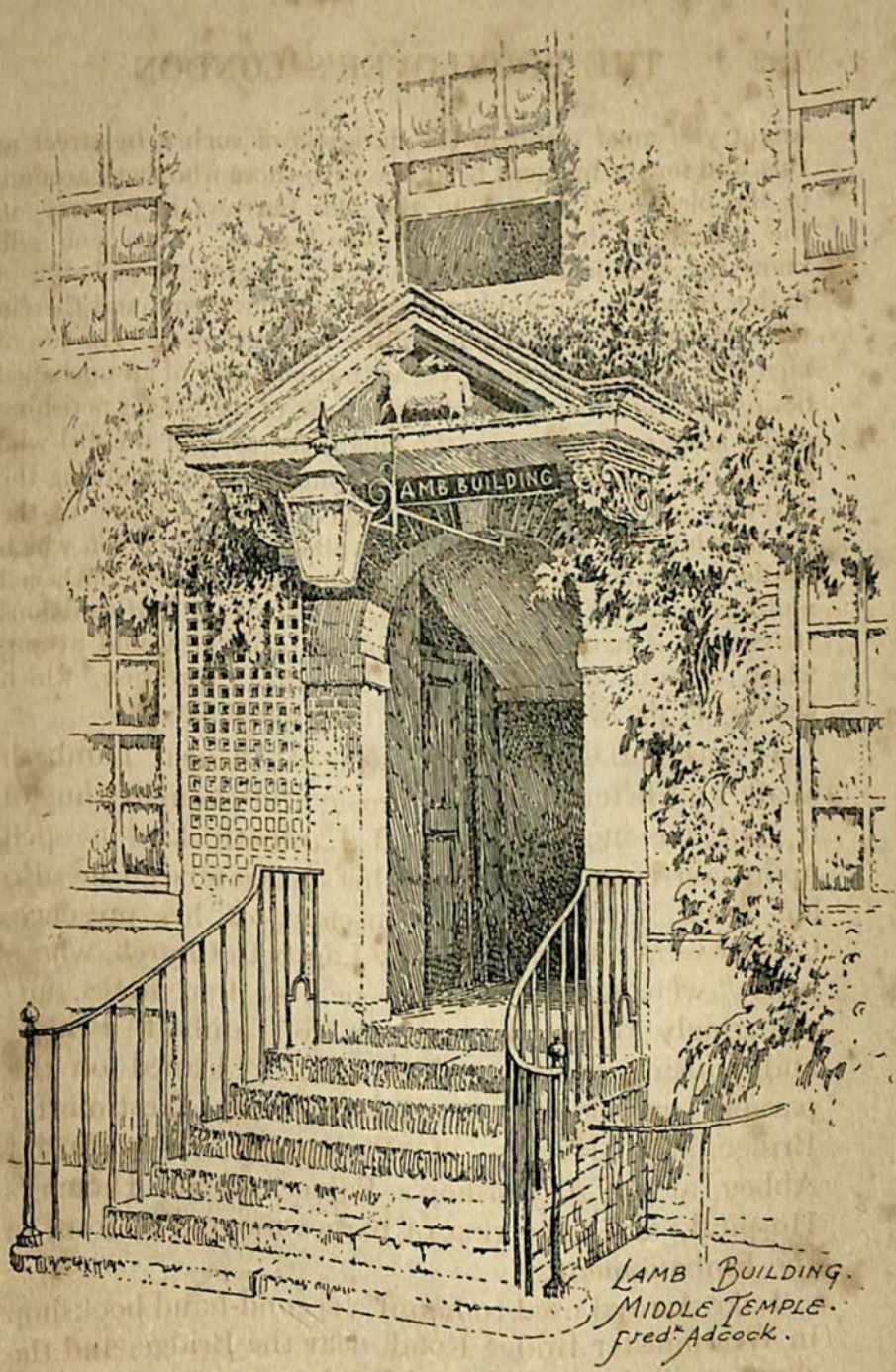
" He walked a short distance among the crowd, then found the noise oppressive and turned into a byway. As he did so, a street organ began to play in front of a public-house close by. Grail drew near ; there were children forming a dance, and he stood to watch them.

" Do you know that music of obscure ways, to which children dance ? Not if you have only heard it ground to your ears' affliction beneath your windows in the square. To hear it

aright you must stand in the darkness of such a by-street as this, and for the moment be at one with those who dwell around, in the blear-eyed houses, in the dim burrows of poverty, in the unmapped haunts of the semi-human. Then you will know the significance of that vulgar clanging of melody; a pathos of which you did not dream will touch you, and therein the secret of hidden London will be half revealed. The life of men who toil without hope, yet with the hunger of an unshaped desire; of women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery; the laugh, the song of the girl who strives to enjoy her year or two of youthful vigor, knowing the darkness of the years to come; the careless defiance of the youth who feels his blood and revolts against the lot which would tame it; all that is purely human in these darkened multitudes speaks to you as you listen. It is the half-conscious striving of a nature which knows not what it would attain, which deforms a true thought by gross expression, which clutches at the beautiful and soils it with foul hands."

It was not Gilbert Grail who stood near Lambeth Walk and listened to that music and thought thus of it, but Gissing himself, and Lambeth lays a spell upon you because wherever his characters go he also has been, and you are conscious of his presence. Gilbert went on and passed by Lambeth Church, whose bells "were ringing a harsh peal of four notes, unchangingly repeated," and on to Lambeth Bridge, and pausing in the middle of it, "leaned on the parapet and looked northwards," at Westminster Bridge, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, at the Archbishop's Palace, at St. Thomas's Hospital, and the string of barges moored in front of the Embankment.

Luke Acroyd used to haunt a second-hand bookshop in Westminster Bridge Road, near the Bridge, and the shop is still there. He and Grail spoke of it one night



LAMB BUILDING.
MIDDLE TEMPLE.
Fred^k Adcock.

"In Lamb Building that faces you as you round the corner of the Church, Pendennis and Warrington had chambers on the third floor."

Chapter 10

as they walked together past the Archbishop's Palace; then, "from the foot of Lambeth Bridge, turned into a district of small houses and multifarious workshops. Presently they entered Paradise Street," which was where Acroyd lived:

"The name is less descriptive than it might be. Poor dwellings, mean and cheerless, are intersperced with factories and one or two small shops; a public-house is prominent, and a railway arch breaks the perspective of the thoroughfare midway. The street at that time—in the year '80—began by the side of a graveyard, no longer used, and associated in the minds of those who dwelt around it with numberless burials in a dire season of cholera. The space has since been converted into a flower-garden, open to the children of the neighbourhood, and in summer time the bright flower-beds enhance the ignoble baldness of the byway."

Bowers shop, too—a small general shop—was in Paradise Street, close by the railway arch, and a meeting place for many of the people of the story. A resident in the adjacent Newport Street was Totty Nancarrow, one of the least respectable but most sympathetically drawn women-characters in the book. Before starting to found his library, Mr. Egremont, benevolently inspired, opened a lecture hall in a room over a saddler's shop in High Street, Lambeth. Later, after the library troubles had commenced, when Thyrza was wildly in love with Egremont and wretched because she had not seen him for some time, she went out one evening from Walnut Tree Walk, and calling to see Totty Nancarrow, in Newport Street, found she was not at home, so sat in her room waiting for her. By-and-by, she heard Egremont's voice; he had called to interview another lodger, Mr. Bunce, and as soon as she heard the street

door close behind him, she ran down and went in pursuit; she overtook him, and on Lambeth Bridge they had what was to be their last talk together. But the homes and haunts of these people in *Thyrza* are thick about Lambeth: in Paradise Street, and Ground Street; along Westminster Bridge Road; in the New Cut, where Mr. Boddy once had a shop; and while you are there you may recollect that M. Fandango, of *Christopher Tadpole*, was "a professor of dancing in the New Cut," and Luke, in Massinger's *City Madam*, complains that his gentlemen 'prentices waste their time in the evil haunts of the neighbouring Lambeth Marsh.

On the morning of the 3rd September 1803, Wordsworth lingered on Westminster Bridge (not the present one, I am sorry to say, but its predecessor) and wrote one of the finest of his sonnets:

> Earth has not anything to show more fair:
> Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
> A sight so touching in its majesty:
> The city now doth like a garment wear
> The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields and to the sky,
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
> Never did sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour valley, rock or hill,
> Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
> The river glideth at his own sweet will;
> Dear God! the very houses seem asleep,
> And all that mighty heart is lying still.

Over Waterloo Bridge passed Pendennis, that day he bent his steps to Vauxhall; and I like to remember that "the jolly man" in Albert Smith's *Christopher*

Tadpole told Mr. Sprouts he had a brother-in-law who kept a firework factory near Bedlam, and whose father was a waiter at Vauxhall. Bedlam, or Bethlehem Hospital, is at the end of Blackfriars Road, and past Bedlam more than once went Totty Nancarrow when she was going to St. George's comparatively new Roman Catholic Cathedral, which is near by:

"She entered and at the proper place dropped on her knees and crossed herself. Then she stood looking about. Near her, hanging against a pillar, was a box with the superscription: 'For the Souls in Purgatory.' She always put a penny into this box, and did so now. Then she walked softly to an image of the Virgin, at whose feet someone had laid hot-house flowers. A poor woman was kneeling there, a woman in rags; her head was bent in prayer, her hands clasped against her breast. Totty knelt beside her, bent her own head, and clasped her hands."

All about Bedlam and St. George's Circus is the ground where the Gordon Rioters gathered, as you may learn from *Barnaby Rudge*, in what was then St. George's Fields. When David Copperfield had resolved to run away from Murdstone and Grinby's, he left their premises in the Blackfriars Road, one evening, and "saw a long-legged young man with a very little empty donkey-cart standing near the Obelisk in the Blackfriars Road"—the Obelisk is at St. George's Circus—and he arranged for the young man to accompany him to his lodgings in the Borough and carry his box to the coach-office for dispatch to Dover. The young man went with him, as you know, and got the box on to his barrow and heartlessly ran away with it. While Dickens was himself living at Lant Street, in the Borough, and working at the blacking factory by Hungerford Stairs, "My usual

way home," he says, "was over Blackfriars Bridge, and down that turning in the Blackfriars Road which has Rowland Hill's chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop door on the other." The chapel is gone: it was transformed into a boxing saloon, last time I passed it; but the golden dog still licking the golden pot remains at the other corner, so much more enduring are the things men make with their hands than are the hands that made them.

If there were no such things as time and space to consider, we would certainly go east of all the Bridges to Deptford, where Christopher Marlowe was killed in his duel with Archer, the player, and where he lies buried in St. Nicholas's churchyard; John Evelyn had a sitting in that same church, and round about it and round the church of St. Paul's are the streets and lanes and taverns and houses that are familiar to anyone who has read that best of Sir Walter Besant's romances, *The World Went Very Well Then*, which he founded, as he mentions in a preface, "on the Chronicles of Deptford, and on a tombstone in the Church of St. Nicholas," possibly the tombstone to the memory of "Captain George Shelvocke," who was "bred to sea-service under Admiral Benbow," for though the hero of the tale is Jack Easterbrook, and the date of it is something later than Benbow's time, George Shelvocke is one of its characters, and the talk of Shelvocke about his seafaring adventures largely influences Jack to a yearning for the life of a sailor. But we will keep within range of the Bridges, and the last of these that we will say any more of here is Southwark Bridge.

On Southwark Bridge (which is being altered and widened whilst I write) young John Chivery walked with Little Dorrit and was brought at length to understand that she could never love him; she sat on one of the seats after he had left her, "and not only rested her little hand upon the rough wall, but laid her face against it, too, as if her head were heavy, and her mind were sad." And Dickens came over Southwark Bridge that day he had been ill at the blacking factory, when one of the boys who worked with him, Bob Fagin, insisted on accompanying him home. He only slept in Lant Street and took his meals in the prison with his father, and was ashamed that this should be known:

"I was too proud to let him know about the prison, and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark Bridge, on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality, in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr Robert Fagin's house."

Let me remind you here that when, a chapter or two back, we saw Dr. Luttrel of Besant's *Bell of St. Paul's*, purchase for five pounds the small boy Sam, of his grandmother in Sweet Lilac Walk, Spitalfields, Sam's little sister, Sal, pursued the Doctor's cab to see where the boy was taken: overtook it, hung on behind and was carried with it through the City, up Queen Street, and across Southwark Bridge:

"On the other side it presently turned to the right into a region of small streets, with mean houses standing among great factories. In one of these streets it stopped. Sal slid down quickly and retreated to the shelter of a neighbouring lamp-post where, half hidden, she could watch. When the

gentleman had gone into the house and the cab had driven away, the child left her lamp-post and examined at her ease both house and street. The house was easy to remember. It was of two stories with three windows at the top, and two below; the door between the two was not an ordinary door, but set back in a broad frame with two short pillars, not forming a porch but flat with the front of the house. They were pillars of the Doric order, and the girl noted their shape though she knew not its name. . . . There was a brass plate on the door—the girl could not read, yet she could remember the appearance of the letters—they announced that Robert Luttrel, M.D., lived and presumably practised the science of healing in that house."

There were "works" in the street, and a Church, and at the end was the river. The whole description is that of Emerson Street, and the house with the two short pillars is still to be seen in it. The street opened on to Bankside, and all along Bankside is reminiscent of *The Bell of St. Paul's*, as well as of much older and far more glorious literature. A stone's throw away on the eastern side of Southwark Bridge glooms that brewery which has replaced Shakespeare's theatre, The Globe. From Bankside, on this western side of the Bridge, goes Rose Alley, indicating the site of the theatre of that name that was contemporary with The Globe. A few paces on, and you note another alley called Bear Garden, and you remember the Bear Garden on Bankside so often spoken of in Elizabethan writings. Adjacent is Love Lane, in Shakespeare's day a green, country lane, now a barren, black alley with walls of factories towering up on either hand. Laurence Waller, over from Australia in search of certain members of his family, took up lodgings with Mr. Lucius Cottle, on

Bankside, and you will find an ample description of the place in *The Bell of St. Paul's*, and something of its history. The ancient wooden wall that Besant wrote of, the steps down to the water, the noticeable house occupied by Mr. Cottle and his family, the view from Bankside of the city across the river—it is all so little changed that I shall quote with as little further comment as possible:

"It was the evening of the longest day of all the year. . . . About a quarter past eight on this day a young man was leaning over the wooden wall of the old first and original—for many years the only Embankment, called Bank Side, watching the river, and the City on the other side. He stood at that spot—it is on the west of Southwark Bridge, where there are Stairs. They are not ancient Stairs: they are not those at which the Elizabethan citizens landed to see the matinee at the Globe, to catch a fleeting rapture at the Baiting of the Bear, or to make love among the winding walks of Paris Gardens. These Stairs are mere modern things constructed in the last century. But some thoughtful Resident, ancient or modern, has caused to be built above them a small pen, enclosure or fold, furnished with two wooden benches, capable of holding at least four persons, and forming a gazebo or belvedere from which to view the river and to take the air. . . . Where the young man stood, if he looked down the river he could see, close at hand, Southwark Bridge, and beyond it the ugly railway bridge, running into the ugly railway station: both together shut out the view of all that lay beyond—London Bridge and the Tower and the masts of the ships in the Pool. Even the most splendid sunset cannot make the Cannon Street Terminus beautiful. But if he looked up the river he saw, first, Blackfriars Bridge, standing out with sharp clear lines, as if cut out of black cardboard; above it, the dazzling golden light of the western sky, and below it the broad bosom of the river at the flood. . . . Then he looked across the river. Immediately opposite rose the pile of St. Paul's, vast and

majestic—Bank Side is now the only place where you have a really good view of St. Paul's. On either side of St. Paul's rose in lesser glory the spire of St. Bride, the Dragon of Bow, the pinnacles of Aldermarie, the Tower of St. Michael's, and I know not how many more of Wren's masterpieces. . . . Below the Churches, on the northern bank, are the wharves and warehouses—Paul's Wharf, Baynard's Castle, and the ancient Port of Queenhithe. This old harbour still retaineth its former shape, though its buildings, which were once low, mean and ugly, yet picturesque, have long since been transformed into others, bigger and uglier, yet not picturesque."

The young man gazing on these things was Laurence Waller; and turning from the river, he presently surveys the houses facing it, and "the old Embankment with its wooden walls:"

"The place was littered with coils of rusty chain and bits of rusty machinery. There were cranes for the hoisting of things in and out of the barges; there were stairs to the water; there were planks lying in position for the wheelbarrows between the Embankment and the barges: on the other side of the road were gates leading to factories, works and wharves."

Which is all as it is to-day, and there still is that house—"quite the cleanest and most respectable house on Bank Side"—wherein Laurence Waller had taken lodgings, and as Laurence was looking at it, in his general view of Bankside, he saw Mr. Lucius Cottle come out: "he descended the two door-steps with as much dignity as if they had been the staircase of a Venetian Palazzo. . . . Then he turned and contemplated the house . . . with infinite pride. Certainly the brightest, the most recently painted, and the cleanest on the whole Embankment. . . . There were clean white curtains to all the windows; the iron railings in the front were clean; the windows

were bright; the brass knocker and the handle were polished; the door-steps were white." Althea was Cottle's niece, and she and one of his daughters were out in a boat which brought them back to the stairs whilst Cottle and Laurence stood conversing; they all crossed and entered the house together, and indoors Laurence was introduced to them and the rest of the family. It was not many days before Laurence and Althea came to the head of the stairs, descended them and went boating thence together, he at the oars, she steering.

There was an occasion when she conducted him all along Bankside, reconstructing it, pointing out ancient landmarks and describing them as they used to be when Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, and their friends trod these ways in the flesh:

"'Let us begin. See, now, this is Love Lane.' Laurence looked down a dark passage with high buildings on either side, so narrow that there was hardly room for two men to pass each other." She goes on to explain that Love Lane ran along the west side of Paris Gardens, and to tell him something of the bear-baiting and bull-baiting that went on there. Then at the end of Bankside, they turn off into Holland Street, and pass the decaying, dirty old houses in it, and Hopton's quiet, rather forlorn looking Almshouses, and so round to the left, past the other end of Love Lane, Bear Garden, and other alleys that wind up from Bankside, until they pass under the arches of Southwark Bridge. "A little beyond the Bridge begins the wall of the great Brewery. Althea stopped before this wall. 'There,' she said, 'is the Globe Theatre.'" A tablet on the brewery wall testifies to

the fact that here it used to be; but Park Street, as it is now ironically called, has lost all its happier aspect, as well as its theatre—it is as sombre and hideous a street as any in London; spanned at one end by the railway arches, shut in by great gloomy buildings, there is something, blind and deaf and infinitely depressing in the very look of it; and if you follow the street to its end it takes you into Clink Street, which marks what were once the Liberties of the horrible old Prison of that name. It and other of the streets round it, are composed solely of mighty flour mills, factories, warehouses—nobody lives in them, and if you traverse them of an evening after they are all closed, they wear a grim, forbidding aspect, there is a sense of vague terror hovering in the air of those gaunt, narrow, high, utterly silent and deserted thoroughfares, as if they were streets in a city of the dead, or as if the blight of the old Prison lay heavy upon them—as if it rose like a foul miasma from the ground on which so many sorry rascals and poor wretches have suffered, rose, when the twilight came and the warehouses were all locked up and the workers departed, and drifted up between the tall, close walls, over the pinched, crooked roadways, to make the night here darker, lonelier and more haunted with dread than it is in places that are not built where so many lives have been brutally wasted and so much misery endured.

But we have done with the South of the Thames. We are going back to Southwark Bridge and over it; up Cannon Street to St. Paul's, which we have already seen from a distance when we leaned with Laurence Waller over the wooden wall of Bankside.*

CHAPTER IX

IN THE SHADOW OF ST. PAUL'S

THIS is not the St. Paul's that the Elizabethans knew: the St. Paul's that had the little chapel of St. Faith down in its crypt, when Beaumont and Fletcher made Humphrey, in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, swear that, since his wife had gone from him he would, in the dark,

> wear out my shoe-soles
> In passion, in Saint Faith's church under Paul's.

That St. Paul's had a steeple, and its nave was a meeting place for all the gentlemen about town, and a market-place for pedlars and costermongers, till the state of things became a crying scandal and had to be put an end to. The plays of the old dramatists are full of references to it and its steeple, and the motley crowd that met and transacted business and occasionally fought duels in its nave. It is that earlier building that stands in Ainsworth's *Old St. Paul's*, and he sends the weird, half-mad Solomon Eagle up to walk on its high parapet carrying his brazier of blazing charcoal and shouting forth warnings of doom over the plague-smitten City. Old St. Paul's was destroyed in the Great Fire, but the new one, that Wren built in its place, is old now and rich in associations of its own.

It has been the scene of many notable events in the nation's history; under its aisles great men, as Nelson and Wellington, Reynolds, Turner, Millais, Leighton, Sullivan, lie buried,

Here in streaming London's central roar,

and a multitude of men famous the world over have entered its splendid portals one time or another in the last two centuries. "Seeing the door of St. Paul's, under one of the semicircular porches, was partially open," writes Nathaniel Hawthorne, recording his own visit to London, "I went in, and found that the afternoon service was about to be performed; so I remained to hear it, and to see what I could of the cathedral. . . . It is pleasant to stand in the centre of the cathedral," he adds, writing of his rovings about it after the service, "and hear the noise of London, loudest all round this spot—how it is calmed into a sound as proper to be heard through the aisles as the sound of its own organ." The sight of the great dome dominating London, soaring high above it,

Afloat upon etherial tides,

as John Davidson has it, impressed John Browdie, of *Nicholas Nickleby*, when he and 'Tilda saw it from the top of the coach as they rode into London down St. Martin's le Grand, from the north, no less than it impressed the negro, Gumbo, when he and young Clive Newcome saw it as they rode into London over London Bridge, from the south; and Hood gives you a notion of what London looks like when you view it from above the dome, in his *Moral Reflections on the Cross of St. Paul's*:

The man that pays his pence and goes
  Up to thy lofty cross, St. Paul's,
Looks over London's naked nose:
    Women and men,
    The world is all beneath his ken,
  He sits above the Ball,
He seems on mount Olympus' top
Among the gods, by Jupiter! and lets drop
  His eyes from the empyreal clouds
    On mortal crowds.

    Seen from these skies
    How small those emmets in our eyes! . . .
Oh! what are men?—Beings so small
    That should I fall
  Upon their little heads I must
Crush them by hundreds into dust!

Out of *The Bell of St. Paul's* came Althea into St. Paul's Churchyard with her old father, the poet, Mr. Indagine, who was hankering to revisit the haunts of his youth:

"They stood at last on the steps of St. Paul's, and looked down upon the crowd of Ludgate Hill. 'Thus I stood,' said the Poet, 'more than thirty years ago. It was midnight, but the streets were crowded, because the City was illuminated for the Peace.' . . . They descended the steps. 'Let us pay a visit to the Row,' he said; 'it is long since my eyes were gladdened with a sight of the only trade worth attention.'"

He took her through a narrow passage—there are half a dozen narrow passages on the northern side of the Churchyard—into Paternoster Row, still as almost wholly devoted to publishing as it was four or five centuries ago, and still the same narrow, cart-blocked thoroughfare it was when Southey went there to call on his publishers, the Longmans, who are still there,

when Chatterton hovered about the Chapter Coffee House, some remnant of which remains in the new building at the corner of Chapter House Court, and when Charlotte Brontë put up, for a few days, in the same celebrated establishment, which had earlier associations too with Goldsmith and his contemporaries. Pendennis's publisher, Mr Bungay, had his shop in Paternoster Row, and on a memorable occasion Pendennis and Warrington drove to his door in a carriage, to attend a dinner that Bungay was giving to his friends and clients. The dinner was furnished by the caterer Griggs, of St. Paul's Churchyard, and one of the waiters, "a *very* bow-windowed man," was, according to the humorist, Wagg, "an undertaker in Amen Corner, and attends funerals and dinners." We will go the western end of Paternoster Row, which is Amen Corner, with Althea and Mr. Indagine, before we return to the Churchyard:

"He led the way down the Row to the end where wooden gates stood at the end of a broad court. 'My dear, it is Amen Corner,' he said. 'Let us look in. I remember coming here day after day, thinking how quiet and happy must be those who lived in this Cloister.' . . . He opened the gate and led the way into the place: there is a row of quiet looking houses and then one turns into a broad court covered with ground ivy instead of grass, but with a few flower beds and trees and red-gabled buildings, with an archway in red brick like a college."

It is all there, as they saw it; but we leave them going on into Ludgate Hill, and go back to St. Paul's Churchyard. Scattered round the Churchyard once were the shops of publishers; you may find the names and signs of them recorded on the title-pages of hundreds of Elizabethan and Georgian volumes.

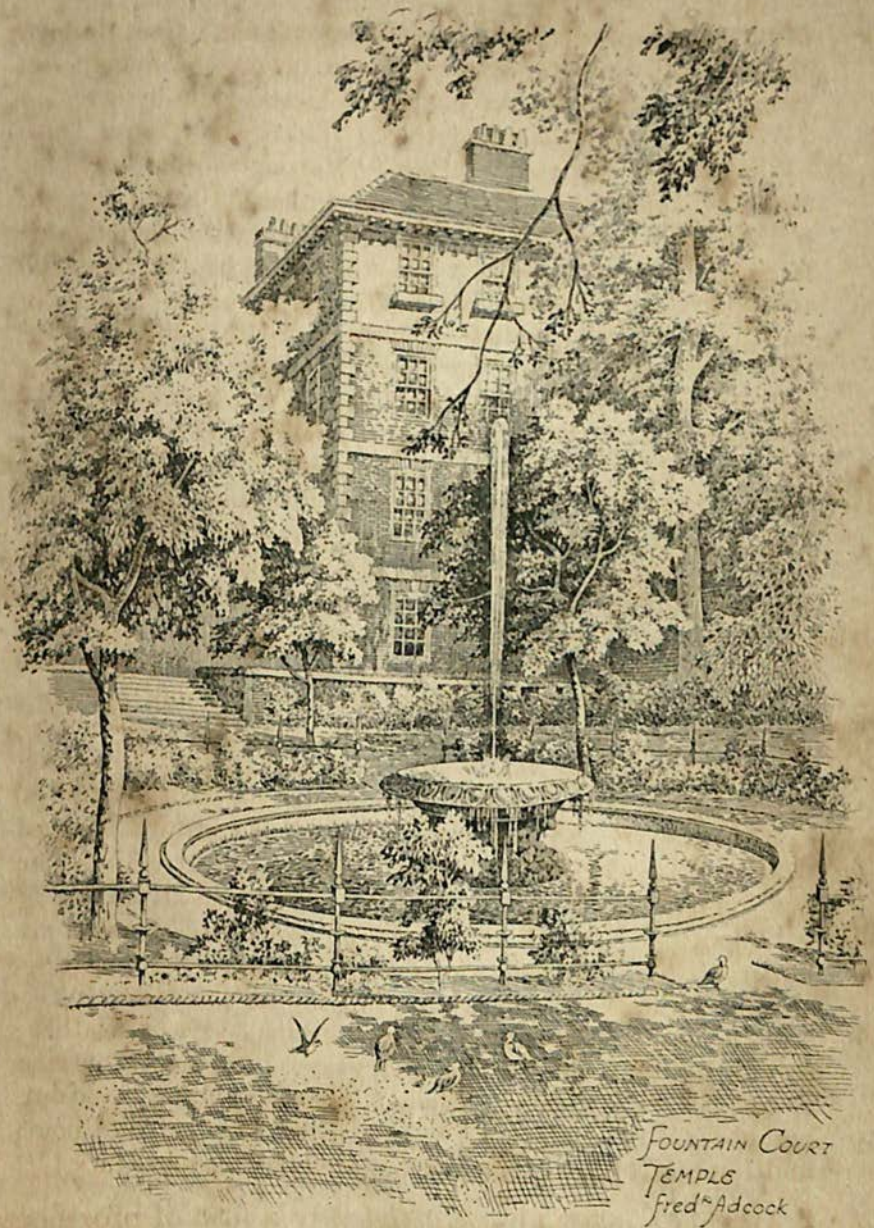
But nowadays it is mostly given over to the silk, cotton and woollen trades; and I like to remember that W. B. Rands (Matthew Browne) in 1866 dedicated a volume of his essays (and he is an essayist too much and too foolishly neglected) to "George Bowness Carr, Esquire, of Westmoreland and London, Merchant, and all Friends round St. Paul's;" from which I take it he was someway connected with Mr. Carr's business—had possibly been a clerk in his warehouse here.

"Walking without any definite object through St. Paul's Churchyard," you read in one of the *Sketches by Boz*, "we happened to turn down a street entitled 'Paul's Chain,' and keeping straight forward for a few hundred yards, found ourselves, as a natural consequence, in Doctors' Commons;" and there follows a description of the old Divorce Court that is there no longer. "'Boots,' said Mr. Jingle to Sam Weller, in a room of that White Hart, where we saw him in our last chapter, 'Do you know—what's a-name—Doctors' Commons?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Where is it?' 'Paul's Churchyard, sir; low archway on the carriage side, bookseller's at one corner, hot-el on the other, and two porters in the middle as touts for licences.' . . . 'What do they do?' inquired the gentleman.

"'Do! *You*, sir! That an't the worst on it, neither. They put things into old gen'lm'ns heads as they never dreamed of. My father, sir, vos a coachman. A vidower he vos, and fat enough for anything—uncommon fat, to be sure. His missus dies, and leaves him four hundred pound. Down he goes to the Commons, to see the lawyer and draw the blunt—wery smart—top boots on—nosegay in his button-hole—broad-

brimmed tile—green shawl—quite the gen'lm'n. Goes through the archvay, thinking how he should inwest the money—up comes the touter, touches his hat—'Licence, sir, licence?'—'What's that?' says my father. 'Licence, sir,' says he.—'What licence?' says my father.—'Marriage licence,' says the touter.—'Dash my veskit,' says my father, 'I never thought o' that.'—'I think you wants one, sir,' says the touter. My father pulls up, and thinks a bit—'No,' says he, 'damme, I'm too old, b'sides I'm a many sizes too large,' says he.—'Not a bit on it, sir,' says the touter.—'Think not?' says my father.—'I'm sure not,' says he; 'we married a gen'lm'n twice your size last Monday.'—'Did you, though,' says my father.—'To be sure ve did,' says the touter, 'you're a babby to him—this vay, sir—this vay!'—and sure enough my father walks arter him, like a tame monkey behind a horgan, into a little back office, vere a feller sat among dirty papers and tin boxes, making believe to be busy. 'Pray take a seat, vile I makes out the affadavit, sir,' says the lawyer.—'Thankee, sir,' says my father, and down he sat and stared vith all his eyes, and his mouth vide open, at the names on the boxes.—'What's your name, sir?' says the lawyer.—'Tony Weller,' says my father.—'Parish?' says the lawyer.—'Belle Savage,' says my father; for he stopped there ven he drove up, and he know'd nothing about parishes, he didn't. 'And what's the lady's name?' says the lawyer. My father was struck all of a heap. 'Blessed if I know,' says he.—'Not know!' says the lawyer.—'No more nor you do,' says my father, 'can't I put that in arterwards?'—'Impossible!' says the lawyer—'Wery well,' says my father, after he'd thcught a moment, 'put down Mrs Clarke.'—'What Clarke?' says the lawyer, dipping his pen in the ink.—'Susan Clarke, Markis o' Granby, Dorking,' says my father; 'she'll have me, if I ask her, I des-say. I never said nothing to her, but she'll have me, I know.' The licence was made out, and she *did* have him, and what's more she's got him now; and *I* never had any of the four hundred pound, worse luck!'"

David Copperfield was articled to a firm of proctors, Messrs. Spenlow and Jorkins, in Doctors' Commons,



The meeting place of Tom Pinch and his sister, in "Martin Chuzzlewit."

Chapter 10

" a lazy old nook near St. Paul's Churchyard . . . a little out-of-the-way place where they administer ecclesiastical law ; " or used to until the New Law Courts were built in the Strand. He called for his Aunt, Betsy Trotwood, at her rooms in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and they went afoot by Fleet Street and up Ludgate Hill, to St. Paul's Churchyard. In Ludgate Hill, she was startled by the sight of that mysterious, miserable rascal, her husband—the pitiful wretch of whose existence David had no knowledge, and who was secretly blackmailing her. She told Copperfield to call a coach for her, and to go on and wait in St. Paul's Churchyard ; he saw her and the man get into the coach here and drive on, and after he had waited half an hour in the Churchyard for her, she came back in the coach alone, and they continued their journey together. " Doctors' Commons was approached by a little low archway. Before we had taken many places down the street beyond it, the noise of the city seemed to melt as if by magic, into a softened distance. A few dull courts and narrow ways brought us to the sky-lighted offices of Spenlow and Jorkins." Here David Copperfield came daily to study his profession ; here he dreamed and was happy and wretched in his wild love for Dora Spenlow ; and one day he accompanied Mr. Spenlow to " a certain coffee-house, which in those days had a door opening into the Commons, just within the little archway in St. Paul's Churchyard," and there he found Miss Murdstone awaiting him : she had discovered that he loved Dora and was writing to her, had intercepted his letters and betrayed him to Mr. Spenlow, who demanded his daughter's letters back

and declared that all this "youthful folly" must be at an end.

The archway is gone within the last year or two, but here still is the street, the last on the left before you reach Ludgate Hill—the street down which David and Betsy Trotwood walked, and at the entrance to which Mr. Weller was waylaid by the tout. More recently, Mr. Gammon, of Gissing's *Town Traveller* came with Mr. Clover, otherwise Lord Polperro, into St. Paul's Churchyard, and witnessed a scene that happens there still at the end of every year. Their cab ascended Ludgate Hill with difficulty through a mob that was going the same way: "the people were thronging to hear St. Paul's strike the midnight hour;" and when Gammon found that Mr. Greenacre was not waiting for them at the Bilboes, he suggested that he and Polperro should stroll back to St. Paul's and look at the crowd:

"It seemed probable that when they had gone a little distance Lord Polperro would feel shaky and consent to take a cab. Drink, however, had invigorated the man; he reeled a little and talked very huskily, but declared that the walk was enjoyable.

"'Let's get into the crowd, Gammon, I like a crowd. What are those bells ringing for? Yes, yes, of course, I remember—New Year's Eve. I had no idea that people came here to see the New Year in. I shall come again. I shall come every year; it's most enjoyable.'

"They entered the Churchyard, and were soon amid a noisy, hustling throng, an assembly composed of clerks, roughs and pickpockets, with a sprinkling of well-to-do rowdies, and numerous girls or women, whose shrieks, screams and yelps sounded above the deeper notes of masculine uproar. Gammon, holding tight to his companion's arm, endeavoured to pilot

him in the direction where the crowd was thinnest, still moving westward; but Lord Polperro caught the contagion of the tumult and began pressing vehemently into the surging mass.

"'This does me good, Gammon. It's a long time since I've mixed with people. I always enjoyed a crowd. Hollo—o—o!' His excited shout made him cough terribly; none the less he pushed on.

"'You'll come to harm,' said the other. 'Don't be a fool; get out of this.'

"A struggle began between them. . . . Lord Polperro did not resent the tugs at his arm; he took it for genial horseplay, and only shouted louder. . . . Blackguards in front of him were bellowing a filthy song; his lordship tried to join in the melody. A girl who was jammed against him shot liquid into his ear out of a squirt, and another of her kind knocked his hat off. . . . Polperro happened to press against a drunken woman; she caught him by his disordered hair and tugged at it, yelling into his face. To release himself he bent forward, pushing the woman away; the result was a violent blow from her fist, after which she raised a shriek as if of pain or terror. Instantly a man sprang forward to her defence, and he, too, planted his fist between the eyes of the hapless peer."

Gammon tackled this rough, the fighting became more or less general, in the thick of it Polperro fell; the police interfered and Gammon was swept away in the rush. "From church towers east and west the chimes rang merrily for the New Year. Softly fell the snow from a black sky, and was forthwith trodden into slush." Presently, when Gammon had managed to struggle back to the scene of the disturbance, he found Lord Polperro lying unconscious with a ring of police round him, and after he had revealed the identity of the injured man they took him in a cab to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in Smithfield, where he ended by dying of his injuries.

On the Sunday evening of his arrival in London, Arthur Clennam, of *Little Dorrit*, oppressed by the gloom of a London Sunday, " sat in the window of the coffee-house on Ludgate Hill, counting one of the neighbouring bells, making sentences and burdens of songs out of it in spite of himself, and wondering how many sick people it might be the death of in the course of the year. . . . He sat in the same place as the day died, looking at the dull houses opposite, and thinking, if the disembodied spirits of former inhabitants were ever conscious of them, how they must pity themselves for their old places of imprisonment. . . . Presently the rain began to fall in slanting lines between him and those houses. . . . In the country, the rain would have developed a thousand fresh scents, and every drop would have had its bright association with some beautiful form or growth of life. In the city, it developed only foul stale smells, and was a sickly, lukewarm, dirt-stained, wretched addition to the gutters." He watched a crowd sheltering " under the public archway opposite," which must have been the arch into Ludgate Square, and enables you to locate the position of the coffee-house. Putting on his hat and coat, Clennam went out through this dismal weather, " crossed by St. Paul's," and made his way towards that decaying old house of his mother's down by Thames Street.

The Citizen's Wife, sitting as one of the audience, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, alarmed by the threats of Jasper, in the scene on the stage, shouts to her husband : " Away, George, away ! raise the watch at Ludgate, and bring a mittimus from the justice for this desperate villain ! "

The watch-house was by the gate, and Lud Gate barred the Hill just on the city side of Old Bailey, until towards the end of the eighteenth century. In Webster's indifferent drama, *The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, he brings Wyatt to Lud Gate, heading a rebellion against Mary, in favour of Lady Elizabeth. He and his handful of adherents come up from Fleet Street, and are halted here:

> Soft! this is Ludgate: stand aloof; I'll knock.

He knocks, and the Earl of Pembroke appearing on the walls scoffs at Wyatt's demand to

> Open your gates, you lowering citizens,

and threatens to turn his cannon on them unless they leave the city gates without delay. Wyatt feels that discretion is the better part, and orders his troops to "march back towards Fleet Street," and on the way, disheartened by this failure, they fall from him and, deserted and alone, he is soon captured without difficulty.

Near the foot of Ludgate Hill, on the right, is La Belle Sauvage, the old inn yard that Mr. Weller named as his parish, because it happened to be the stopping place of the coach he drove. The yard keeps its ancient shape, but you will find nothing of the inn there, nor of the house in which Grinling Gibbons used to live.

Before we pass on into Fleet Street, turn aside to the right up Farringdon Street, for all along here, on the right-hand side of the way, where the Memorial Hall is, Fleet Prison used to stand. When Lady Frugal, in Massinger's *City Madam* is preparing a

banquet, she asks her steward what cooks he has provided. "The best of the city," he assures her: "they've wrought at my Lord Mayor's," but her daughter Anne ejaculates scornfully:

Fie on them! they smell of Fleet Lane and Pie Corner!

Fleet Lane is here, the first turning you come to in Farringdon Street: Pie Corner you have seen in Smithfield. Fleet Ditch ran in the middle of Farringdon Street; Fleet Market was a-litter and a-roar on either side of it. When Kitty Pleydell came to London, after the death of her father, to look for her uncle, the Rev. Gregory Shovel, she and her maid were directed by a maid at the St. Paul's Coffee-house to tell their coachman to drive them "down Ludgate Hill and up the Fleet Market on the prison side; he may stop at the next house to the third Pen and Hand. You will find the doctor's name written on a card in the window." He was, in fact, in Prison for debt, but was allowed to live in the Liberties, which extended to certain houses and streets outside the walls, and there he carried on his profession, as a Doctor of Divinity, and was so famous for his conduct of those shameful but legal unions known as Fleet Marriages, that he had been nicknamed the Chaplain of the Fleet. There and thus they found him, and learned from his clerical tout that he drove a brisk trade in weddings at a guinea apiece, and in *The Chaplain of the Fleet* Besant gives you an excellent picture of the Prison as it was in the eighteenth century, and of the motley, drunken, squalid, wasted lives that were lived in it. Hoyst, in *The City Madam*, being arrested for debt cries out recklessly:

Do your worst, I care not,
I'll be removed to the Fleet and drink and drab there
In spite of your teeth.

But one could fill a book with the literary associations of the Fleet Prison of those days, and earlier and later. The brilliant, shiftless journalist, Shandon, in *Pendennis*, lived with his wife and family and worked in the Fleet Prison; he started and edited "The Pall Mall Gazette" from there, and Warrington and Pendennis, two of his staff, found him in his room there, engaged with his publisher:

"Pen had never seen this scene of London life, and walked with no small interest in at the grim gate of that dismal edifice. They went through the anteroom, where the officers and janitors of the place were seated, and passing in at the wicket, entered the prison. The noise and the crowd, the life and the shouting, the shabby bustle of the place, struck and excited Pen. People moved about ceaselessly and restless, like caged animals in a menagerie. Men were playing at fives. Others pacing and tramping: this one in colloquy with his lawyer in dingy black—that one walking sadly, with his wife by his side and a child on his arm. Some were arrayed in tattered dressing gowns, and had a look of rakish fashion. Everybody seemed to be busy, humming, and on the move. Pen felt as if he choked in the place, and as if the door being locked upon him they would never let him out. They went through a court, up a stone staircase, and through passages full of people, and noise, and cross lights, and black doors clapping and banging; Pen feeling as one does in a feverish morning dream."

Shandon, in his careless, haphazard style, was not altogether unhappy amid these surroundings; it was sad enough for his wife, who felt their position keenly, and was lonely and outcast, but he had his work to

do, and found alleviation in drinking freely with the other inmates.

To the Fleet Prison Mr. Pickwick was conveyed when he refused to pay the damages awarded to Mrs. Bardell in her breach of promise action, and you will know from the *Pickwick Papers* what a vile, barbarous, pitiful, heart-breaking place the prison was in its latter days. For Mr. Pickwick, with his natural benevolence, went about among the humours and the tragedies of it, saw the disorder and bestial dissipations of it, and the dirt, the hideous poverty and blank despair that were shut up ruthlessly within it. He could pity Mr. Jingle when he came upon him, haggard and destitute, herded with the poorest of the poor prisoners. There was a Chancery prisoner there, who had been in "long enough to have lost friends, fortune, home and happiness and to have acquired the right of having a room to himself;" and when Mr. Pickwick, for his greater comfort, was induced by the turnkey to bargain with this shabby, gaunt, cadaverous wretch for the hire of his room, and then, with some touch of compunction, begged him to consider it his own still, when he wanted to rest in quiet, or see any friends who came to visit him, this man broke out vehemently into language that to some may seem melodramatic, but to me seems natural and true, in such circumstances, and to speak not for himself only, but for hundreds of broken, hopeless creatures who wore their lives out uselessly in that accursed place:

"Friends!" interposed the man, in a voice which rattled in his throat. "If I lay dead at the bottom of the deepest

mine in the world, tight screwed down and soldered in my coffin, rotting in the dark and filthy ditch that drags its slime along beneath the foundations of this prison, I could not be more forgotten or unheeded than I am here. I am a dead man—dead to society, without the pity they bestow on those whose souls have passed to judgment. Friends to see *me*! My God! I have sunk from the prime of life into old age in this place, and there is not one to raise his hand above my bed, when I lie dead upon it, and say 'It is a blessing he is gone!'"

That was the unutterably damnable state of things that showed no sign of coming to an end so long as the mass of men were persuaded that they were unfit to rule themselves and were humbly contented to be ruled by what is still sometimes called "the governing class." When I glance over old maps and notice that London used to have more prisons in it than schools and nearly as many prisons as churches, and when I remember that the debtors' prisons were not abolished and the rest conducted decently, humanely, until the democracy had begun to become articulate and to insist on taking a hand in its own control, I am incredulous and amused at those arrogant persons who tell us that none but the caste which used to govern us so disgracefully, and with such unintelligent legal juggleries, is competent to make laws, and that there is peril in democratic government. I never pass along this side of Farringdon Street without recalling that old prison, and the cry of that man who symbolised so many thousands of wasted lives that withered in it. Look up the byways that run in to where once were the prison walls or over what was once the prison ground—they are all blind alleys, and are bleak and shadowed, on summer noons when

Farringdon Street is flooded with sunlight, as if here, as in Clink Street, the gloom of the old prison hangs over the spot even yet and some sense of the intolerable wrong and suffering that have been endured here rose from the very earth, like an exhalation from the past, and could not be forgotten.

CHAPTER X

FLEET STREET AND THE TEMPLE

IT may seem impossible to write of Fleet Street and say nothing of Dr. Johnson and his friends, or of the Temple without saying something of Charles Lamb, but we are going to come as near to doing that as we can. With these and other such realities we have really no business here, and there are far more of our imaginary people connected with both places than I could hope to introduce within the compass of this chapter. I shall not attempt to even catalogue all such who have gone up and down the street, but I seldom pass the pawnshop next door to Racquet Court without recalling that the hero of Christie Murray's fine novel, *Rainbow Gold*, loitered outside it gazing in at its window; or Shoe Lane without recollecting that Dickens brings a busload of miscellaneous characters up Fleet Street, in the *Sketches by Boz*, dropping one at the Lane, and another at Farringdon Street, on the way to the Bank; Mr. Puff, in Foote's farce, *The Patron*, reproaching the hack journalist, Dactyl, with ingratitude, cries, "You, you! What, I suppose you forget your garret in Wine Office Court, when you furnished paragraphs for the Farthing Post at twelve pence a dozen!" and Timothy Capias, in *The Minor*, another of Foote's farces, is one of a club that meets every Tuesday

night at the "Magpye and Horse-Shoe, Fetter Lane." Pendennis was often in Fleet Street; Mr. Theodore Bragge, of Besant's *Seamy Side*, had a weakness for "exchanging ideas on current politics with a friend in a Fleet Street tavern;" Dickens was writing of Johnson's Court, where the *Old Monthly Magazine* was published, when he told of how "stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling," he dropped his first published story, "Mr. Minns and his Cousin," into "a dark letter-box in a dark office up a dark court in Fleet Street;" and nearly opposite is Pleydell Court, into which Dickens walked nightly, after he had become famous and was founding the *Daily News*; and all along Fleet Street came the old Poet, Mr. Indagine (who was, I confess, a bit of a bore) revisiting the haunts of his youth, with Althea, in *The Bell of St. Paul's*:

"'Fleet Street at last!' he cried, lifting his head and looking round him. 'We are in Fleet Street! . . . And now my old friends must be all eighty years of age—eighty years of age!' . . . But he continued to look about him as if it were quite on the cards that he might meet Dickens, Thackeray and Douglas Jerrold marching arm in arm together, jovial and hearty still, though eighty years of age. 'My dear,' he said, 'this is a street of Taverns, all sacred to the memory of England's Worthies. There are the Cock, the Cheshire Cheese, the Rainbow, the Mitre, Dick's—once there was the Devil as well, but they pulled it down a hundred years ago. Cruel! To destroy the Apollo Chamber, the Kingdom of Ben Jonson.'" But one might continue in this style almost endlessly, so let us make an end of such casual jottings and start afresh.

Up the second turning on your left in Fleet Street is St. Bride's Church; Milton lived in one of the houses round the churchyard, and Lovelace was buried in the church; and here Gissing laid a scene of his most poignant, most depressing short story, "The Day of Silence," in *Human Odds and Ends.* The Burdens lived in a court by Southwark Bridge, and a Saturday came when the father went with the little son, Billy, boating up the river with some friends, while the mother, who was dying of heart disease, went to help at a job of cleaning out some offices in an alley off Fleet Street near St. Bride's. Having finished her work; never dreaming that there had been an accident on the river and neither her husband nor her boy would ever return to their home —"She came out into St. Bride's Churchyard, and was passing on towards Fleet Street when again the anguishing spasm seized upon her. She turned and looked at the seats under the wall of the church, where two or three people were resting in the shadowed quiet. It would be better to sit here for a moment. Her weak and weary limbs bore her with difficulty to the nearest bench, and she sank upon it with a sigh. The pain lasted only a minute or two, and in the relief that followed she was glad to breathe the air of the little open space, where she could look up at the blue sky and enjoy the sense of repose. The places of business round about were still vacant and closed till Monday morning. Only a dull sound of traffic came from the great thoroughfare, near at hand as it was. And the wonderful sky made her think of little Billy who was enjoying himself on the river. . . . They would get back about eight o'clock,

most likely. Billy would be hungry; he must have a bit of something for supper—fried liver, or perhaps some stewed steak. It was time for her to be moving on. She stood up, but the movement brought on another attack. Her body sank together, her head fell forwards. Presently the man who was sitting on the next bench began to look at her; he smiled—another victim of the thirsty weather! And half an hour passed before it was discovered that the woman sitting there in the shadow of St. Bride's Church was dead."

Whitefriars Street slopes down to the river through the centre of a district that once held a Carmelite Monastery and its gardens; by the time of James I. the Monastery was gone, but the area that had belonged to it retained its ancient right of sanctuary and was a secure retreat for debtors, highwaymen, cutpurses and all the blackguards of the town who went in danger of the law. Here, again, the disreputable character that the place bore so long continues to assert itself. There is a hangdog, dingy, dissipated air about Whitefriars Street that is curiously at variance with the respectability of most of its buildings; there are mean little shops that seem at home there, and its furtive, shabby, gloomy alleys and courts are the actual courts that wormed their crooked ways through the Elizabethan and Jacobean Alsatia, which lay all along here behind Fleet Street between the Temple and the city wall. The chief interest now of Shadwell's comedy, *The Squire of Alsatia*, is that it realistically reproduces much of that picturesque, riotous region, and the habits, manners and queer slang of its inhabitants. His characters

include Cheatly, "a rascal who by reason of debts dare not stir out of Whitefriars, but there inveigles young heirs in tail, and helps them to goods and money upon great disadvantages; is bound for them, and shares with them, till he undoes them. A lewd, impudent, debauched fellow, very expert in the cant about the town;" Shamwell, "cousin to the Belfonds, an heir, who being ruined by Cheatly, is made a decoy-duck for others; not daring to stir out of Alsatia, where he lives;" Captain Hackum, "a block-headed bully of Alsatia; a cowardly, impudent, blustering fellow; formerly a sergeant in Flanders, run from his colours, retreated into Whitefriars for a very small debt, where by the Alsatians, he is dubbed a captain;" Mrs. Hackum, who lets lodgings; Parson, "an indebted Alsatian divine;" and various other gamblers, cheats, thieves, and rapscallions; to say nothing of Sir William and Sir Edward Belfond, and the ne'er-do-weel son of Sir William, whose scandalous way of life brings his father and others into the lawless, frowsily romantic haunts of Whitefriars in search of him; and you can track him and them here a little to this day. Scrapewell, a hypocritical, godly knave who lives by swindling young heirs, telling young Belfond how very drunk he was the night before, says, "Why, you broke windows; scoured; broke open a house in Dorset Court, and took a pretty wench, a gentleman's natural, away by force," and later you learn that this outrage has been put upon Belfond's blameless younger brother, who has been arrested for it. "He denied that outrage in Dorset Court," says his indignant father, "yet he committed it, and was last night hurried before the

Lord Chief Justice for it." Well, here is still Dorset Street, the successor of Dorset Court, a little east of Whitefriars Street, mounting into Salisbury Square. All through the comedy, this elder son is playing into the hands of the bullies of Alsatia, swaggering "in and about Whitefriars with Cheatly, and that gang of rogues;" he lodges among them; revels and dices and squanders his money with them at the villainous George Tavern; and when his younger brother comes into the place to reason with him, he excuses himself for not having called on his family sooner by saying he would not disgrace them by coming before his new equipage was ready, but he has it now and intended visiting them to-morrow, and incontinently asks his valet: "Is my coach at the gate next to the Green Dragon?" And I like to assume that the Green Dragon just round the corner in Fleet Street, is the lineal descendant of the one he referred to. It was in the George that Sir William Belfond ran his erring son to earth: "As I told you," he says to his brother, Sir Edward, "when I found that the rogue was with his wicked associates at the George, in Whitefriars; when they saw I was resolved to see my son, and was rough with 'em, Cheatly and his rogues set up a cry against me, 'An arrest! A bailiff! an arrest!' The mobile, and all the rakehells in the house and there about the street assembled: I ran, and they had a fair course after me into Fleet Street. Thanks to the vigor I have left, my heels saved my life!" He goes again, this time with a Tipstaff, the constable and his watchmen; and "the posse of the Friars" draw up to oppose him, and "cry out 'An arrest!' Several flock to them with all sorts of

WALPOLE HOUSE.
CHISWICK MALL.
Fred^k Adcock.

"On the Mall, by the Thames, stands Walpole House, which is Miss Pinkerton's Academy, in 'Vanity Fair.'"

Chapter 12

weapons; women with fire-forks, spits, faring-shovels, &c." The rabble beat the constable, his men bolt and escape from Alsatia through one of the gates into the Temple, and Sir William is captured, but his younger son comes in time to his rescue through the same gateway, with "several gentlemen, Porter of the Temple, and Belfond's footmen." The tables are turned, the mob beaten off, and Cheatly, Shamwell and Hackum carried prisoners into the Temple, the Porter being ordered to "shut the gates into Whitefriars," when they are through. Possibly that gate was the one at the end of Tudor Street, which opens into King's Bench Walk. All through the play there is rascality, revelry and rioting going on in Whitefriars Street and the tangled maze of slums, courts and alleys that lie about it, the sound of a horn in the street calling the reckless outlaws together whenever any one of their number is threatened with arrest, or the sheriffs invade the quarter in search of one who has no right of sanctuary.

Shadwell gives you a more intimate and vivid picture of this Alsatia than you get even from Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel.* When Nigel incurred the displeasure of the King by his affray with Lord Dalgarno near the Palace, in St. James's Park, and the officers were in pursuit of him, he sought temporary seclusion in Whitefriars. The residents in the Temple themselves occasionally fled for safety into Alsatia, when they were in debt and the bailiffs after them, and one of these residents, Master Lowestoffe, befriended Nigel, took him to his chambers, lent him a shabbier suit, to avoid suspicion, and conducted him into Whitefriars by one of the Temple gates,—and he, too,

had his adventures at the infamous George tavern, and in these sly alleys and byways, but I shall quote no more than Scott's strongly realised vision of what Nigel saw on his first coming in :

"The ancient Sanctuary at Whitefriars lay considerably lower than the elevated terraces and gardens of the Temple, and was therefore generally involved in the damps and fogs arising from the Thames. The brick buildings, by which it was occupied, crowded closely on each other, for, in a place so rarely privileged, every foot of ground was valuable ; but erected in many cases by persons whose funds were inadequate to their speculations, the houses were generally insufficient, and exhibited the lamentable signs of having become ruinous while they were yet new. The wailing of children, the scolding of their mothers, the miserable exhibition of ragged linens hung from the windows to dry, spoke the wants and distresses of the wretched inhabitants ; while the sounds of complaint were mocked and overwhelmed in the riotous shouts, oaths, and profane songs and boisterous laughter that issued from the alehouses and taverns which, as the signs indicated, were equal in number to all the other houses ; and, that the full character of the place might be evident, several faded, tinselled and painted females looked boldly at the strangers from their open lattices, or more modestly seemed busied with the cracked flower-pots, filled with mignonette and rosemary, which were disposed in front of the windows to the great risk of the passengers."

If you wander about Whitefriars Street, Dorset Street, Salisbury Square (in which Shadwell and, later, Samuel Richardson lived), Magpie Alley, Primrose Hill, Wilderness Lane, Temple Lane, and, especially, Hanging-Sword Alley, you may realise something of the geography and atmosphere of that squalidly romantic Alsatia. You approach Magpie Alley and Hanging-Sword Alley by flights of steps, but those into

Hanging-Sword Alley are the narrower, steeper and higher; at the foot of them is an ancient tavern, The Harrow, which has a fascinatingly brooding and mysterious-looking back window and door round the corner on Primrose Hill; and the Alley itself, at the top of the steps, is long, dim, very narrow and uneven, and still wears much such a secret, shabbily rakish air as it must have worn when the bullies and outlaws of Alsatia lounged and gossiped, wrangled and duelled in it, or tore pell-mell along it and down the steps, at the sound of the horn, to join their motley comrades in repelling some invasion of the sheriffs. Why Scott made no use of this, the most bizarre of Alsatian remains, I do not know; Ainsworth introduces it into one of his highly-coloured romances of the long past; but, better than that, Dickens brings it into his early nineteenth century story, *A Tale of Two Cities*. Jerry Cruncher, the odd job man and occasional porter who used to stand outside Tellson's Bank, which was just within Temple Bar in Fleet Street, had "private lodgings in Hanging-Sword Alley, Whitefriars. . . . Mr. Cruncher's apartments were not in a savoury neighbourhood, and were but two in number, even if a closet with a single pane of glass in it might be counted as one." The Alley is largely a place of back windows, but along one side is a rather high, blind wall with dark little doors in it, and you may depend that one of these few doors was Jerry's, and he went in by it to those apartments in which he was continually protesting against Mrs. Cruncher's habit of "flopping" in prayer for him, because she could not reconcile herself to his unholy business of body-snatching. In one of his two apartments Mr.

Cruncher sat up one night preparing for one of these excursions to a churchyard; he sat smoking until one o'clock, which was his time for starting. "Towards that small and ghostly hour, he rose up from his chair, took a key from his pocket, opened a locked cupboard, and brought forth a sack, a crowbar of convenient size, a rope and chain, and other fishing tackle of that nature. Disposing these articles about him in skilful manner, he bestowed a parting glance of defiance on Mrs. Cruncher, extinguished the light and went out." Young Jerry, his son, curious as to the object of these midnight outings, had only made a feint of undressing when he went to bed; now, "under cover of the darkness he followed out of the room, followed down the stairs, followed down the court, followed out into the streets." As Mr. Cruncher went northwards, you may take it they did not go down the steps at the lower end of the alley, but flitted up it, under the part that is arched over by business premises, and round the bend to where it opens on the higher level of Whitefriars Street. Mr. George, in *Bleak House*, coming from his shooting-gallery near Leicester Square, walked down the Strand, through "the cloisterly Temple, and by Whitefriars (there, not without a glance at Hanging-Sword Alley, which would seem to be something in his way), by Blackfriars Bridge and Blackfriars Road," to the shop now kept by that other old soldier, Matthew Bagnet, in the neighbourhood of the Elephant and Castle.

Tellson's Bank was another name for Child's Bank, which has been rebuilt on the same spot since Temple Bar was demolished. Jerry sat waiting for custom outside it on a stool; he was sitting there when the

funeral procession of Roger Cly, the Old Bailey spy, came up Fleet Street; young Jerry was with him and stood on the stool to see the sight, but old Jerry joined the disorderly mob that after commencing to drag the coffin out of the hearse, altered its mind, swarmed into the mourning-coaches, and joyously and uproariously added itself to the procession.

Opposite Childs', a branch of the Bank of England occupies the site of the Cock Tavern; Pepys once took Mrs. Knipp, the actress to it, but it is better remembered as a favourite haunt of Tennyson's, who addressed his *Will Waterproof's Monologue* to the

> plump head-waiter at the Cock
> To which I most resort.

That side, between the Cock and Chancery Lane, stood the house of Izaak Walton. But we have come too far up the street and must go back to St. Dunstan's Church, not because Dr. Donne used to preach in its predecessor, but because on the pavement outside that predecessor Trotty Veck, of *The Chimes*, used to stand, as a ticket porter, waiting for people to engage him; and because David Ramsay, maker of watches and horologues to his Majesty James I., as you will know if you have read *The Fortunes of Nigel*, used to "keep open shop within Temple Bar, a few yards to the eastward of Saint Dunstan's Church:

"The shop of a London tradesman of that time, as it may be supposed, was something very different from those we now see in the same locality. The goods were exposed for sale in cases, only defended from the weather by a covering of canvas, and the whole resembled the stalls and booths now erected

for the temporary accommodation of dealers at a country fair, rather than the established emporium of a respectable citizen. But most of the shopkeepers of note, and David Ramsay among them, had their booth connected with a small apartment which opened backward from it, and bore the same resemblance to the front shop that Robinson Crusoe's cavern did to the tent which he erected before it. To this Master Ramsay was often accustomed to retreat to the labour of his abstruse calculations; for he aimed at improvement and discoveries in his own art, and sometimes pushed his researches, like Napier and other mathematicians of the period, into abstract science. When thus engaged, he left the outer posts of his commercial establishment to be maintained by two stout-bodied and strong-voiced apprentices, who kept up the cry of 'What d'ye lack? what d'ye lack?' accompanied with the appropriate recommendations of the articles in which they dealt."

When Kate, in Webster's *Northward Ho!* asks Featherstone, "Doth my husband do any things about London? doth he swagger?" he assures her that her husband is "as tame as a fray in Fleet Street when there are nobody to part them;" and you may gather some notion of what this means from Scott's pictures of the wild fights between the 'prentices and the Templars or the citizens, in which combats David Ramsay's two 'prentices took their fair share. There was traffic between Ramsay's pretty daughter Margaret and Mistress Suddlechops, wife of the noted barber whose shop was also in Fleet Street, and to Ramsay's premises by St. Dunstan's came Nigel, Master Heriot, and many another who had to do with Nigel's varying fortunes.

Across the road again, a little beyond the Middle Temple gateway, stood the Devil Tavern where Ben Jonson's famous club held its meetings in the Apollo

room; he lays a scene of his *Staple of News* in the same room of that tavern; and, to say nothing of many a more and less glorious happening there, it was in the Apollo room that Randolph was first introduced to his Master and, "sworn of the tribe of Ben," went away to write "A gratulatory to Master Ben Jonson, for his adopting of him to be his son."

> . . . And to say truth, that which is best in me
> May call you father; 'twas begot by thee.
> Have I a spark of that celestial flame
> Within me? I confess I stole the same,
> Prometheus-like, from thee; and may I feed
> His vulture when I dare deny the deed.
> Many more moons thou hast, that shine by night,
> All bankrupts, were't not for a borrowed light,
> Yet can forswear it; I the debt confess,
> And think my reputation none the less.

I will sooner forgive the removal of Temple Bar than the ruthless sweeping away of a place so sacred as the Devil Tavern; it ought never to have been pulled down; and it is a poor consolation to know that the black board on which the rules of Jonson's club are inscribed, and the bust of Apollo that stood over the door of his room and gave it its name are still preserved in Child's Bank.

Eugene Wrayburn, of *Our Mutual Friend*, shared chambers in Goldsmith Buildings with Mortimer Lightwood. Goldsmith Buildings are in the Temple and are entered from Fleet Street through an archway that faces Chancery Lane, and coming out by that archway one day, after an interview with the two lawyers, Mr. Boffin was jogging along Fleet Street when John Rokesmith overtook him, admitted he

had been following him, and asked, "Would you object to turn aside into this place—I think it is called Clifford's Inn—where we can hear one another better than in the roaring street?" And they walked up the passage against St. Dunstan's under the arch into the Inn, and as Mr. Boffin listened to Rokesmith's appeal for employment as his secretary, Mr. Boffin "glanced into the mouldy little plantation, or cat preserve, of Clifford's Inn, as it was that day, in search of a suggestion. Sparrows were there, cats were there, dry-rot and wet-rot were there, but it was not otherwise a suggestive spot."

On the terrace, across the other side of this railed-in plantation in the middle of Clifford's Inn, stood those old Judges' Chambers to which Mr. Perker came with Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, to conduct certain proceedings in connection with Mr. Pickwick's transfer to the Fleet Prison, but they approached it by an arched entrance from Chancery Lane, and this entrance and the Judges' Chambers themselves are all gone, though they were here within my own memory.

All Chancery Lane is strongly reminiscent of *Bleak House*. Here it is, at the opening of the story, that on a densely foggy day, "in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery;" and if you go in by the old-world gateway out of Chancery Lane, across Old Square, which is very old, there still is Lincoln's Inn Hall, no longer used as a Law Court. To Lincoln's Inn Hall again and again came all those harassed suitors concerned in the notorious cause of "Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce;" Kenge and Carboy, Mr.

Jarndyce's solicitors, had their offices in Old Square, and to their offices went Esther Summerson to be engaged as companion to Ada Clare, John Jarndyce's ward. She met Richard Carstone and Ada there, and they all went over into the Hall with Mr. Kenge to arrange with the Lord Chancellor about Esther's appointment. Afterwards, as Esther, with Ada and Richard hesitated under the colonnade of the Hall, poor little Miss Flyte, "a curious little old woman in a squeezed bonnet, and carrying a reticule, came curtseying and smiling up to us, with an air of great ceremony," to have the honour of knowing "the wards in Jarndyce," she herself being involved in endless Chancery proceedings that had unbalanced her mind; and she accompanied them across Old Square to the foot of the broad, steep flight of stairs that led up into Kenge and Carboy's offices. "We passed into sudden quietude under an old gateway," so Esther describes her first arrival here, in a cab along Chancery Lane, "and drove on through a silent square until we came to an odd nook in a corner, where there was an entrance up a steep, broad flight of stairs, like an entrance to a church. And there really was a churchyard, outside under some cloisters, for I saw the gravestones from the staircase window." Stand in those cloisters now and you can look across at Kenge and Carboy's offices. Mr. Guppy and young Smallweed were clerks in the office, and on a hot day in vacation-time, taking a breath of air at the window, "looking out into the shade of Old Square, surveying the intolerable brick and mortar, Mr. Guppy becomes conscious of a manly whisker emerging from the cloistered walk below and turning itself up in the

direction of his face;" the owner of the whisker proves to be his friend Mr. Jobling, who stands under the window and induces Mr. Guppy to throw him down the loan of half a crown.

Through the cloisters, and you come out into Stone Buildings, where Mr. Wharton, the barrister, in Trollope's *Prime Minister*, had his chambers. Stone Buildings is formed by two tall rows and an end wall of drab stone houses, with steps to their front doorways and wide, railed-in areas before their basements. Those on the right back upon Chancery Lane; Mr. Wharton's chambers must have been on the left, and at the back, for "he had a large, pleasant room in which to sit, looking out from the ground floor of Stone Buildings on to the gardens belonging to the Inn." High up in Stone Buildings, on the left, and at the back too, lived Raymond Pennicuick, of James Payn's *By Proxy*, for he had a window "looking down on the green." If instead of going out to Stone Buildings, you pass from Old Square by Lincoln's Inn Hall, across New Square (where in his boyhood Dickens was employed as a lawyer's clerk), you emerge upon the broad open space of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here, in the opening scene of Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle*, the wild, roving Roebuck meets with the wealthy young Lucinda and her maid, and after some flippant converse, suddenly kisses Lucinda and catching her up is carrying her off when, to her cries for help, Lovewell and his man dash in, and he and Roebuck have drawn their swords and are on the verge of fighting a duel, but recognise each other as old friends and embrace instead. Again, in *Sir Harry Wildair* Farquhar has a scene in Lincoln's Inn

Fields, where Sir Harry is fighting a ludicrous duel with Monsieur the Marquis, when Colonel Standard and Captain Fireball arrive and part them. Doctor Hellebore, in Foote's play, *The Cozeners*, lives at "the third door to the left in Lincoln's Inn Fields;" at No. 55, lived Tennyson; and at No. 58, John Forster, whose house and chambers Dickens described as those of Mr. Tulkinghorn, in *Bleak House*: "Here, in a large house, formerly a house of state, lives Mr. Tulkinghorn. It is let off in sets of chambers now; and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness, lawyers lie like maggots in nuts." Mr. Tulkinghorn enters Lincoln's Inn Fields one evening, from Chesney Wold, whilst the lamplighter is lighting the lamps, and "arrives at his own dull courtyard. He ascends the doorsteps and is gliding into the dusky hall, when he encounters, on the top step, a bowing and propitiatory little man." This is Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer, of Took's Court; talking with whom, Mr. Tulkinghorn "leans his arms on the iron railing at the top of the steps, and looks at the lamplighter lighting the courtyard." By and by, in his room upstairs, Mr. Tulkinghorn is to be murdered; but this house's greater interest, after all, is that to it came Forster's friends, who included most of the men great in art and letters of his day; and in his room here on the 2nd December, 1844, Carlyle, Douglas Jerrold, Maclise, Forster, and others gathered to hear Dickens read *The Chimes* before it was published.

Polly Sparkes of Gissing's *Town Traveller*, once came to keep an appointment with a mysterious correspondent in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and waited for him in vain "on the quiet pavement shadowed by

the College of Surgeons ; " Mr. Wharton and Fletcher, in *The Prime Minister*, dined in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, at " a very quaint old-fashioned dining-house ; " and I suspect that this was the same " quiet house of refreshment in the vicinity of Lincoln's Inn Fields " to which Joseph Snowden and Mr. Scawthorne, in Gissing's *Nether World*, came when they were plotting together against Joseph's father. On the western side of the Fields, in Portsmouth Street, is the quaint old shop that confidently proclaims itself as Dickens's original " Old Curiosity Shop," but it does not answer to the description of the shop in the book, so you may believe it or not, as you choose.

Between the old Lincoln's Inn gateway and Carey Street, out of Chancery Lane, is Bishop's Court, one of those odd, attenuated byways that old London loved ; and at the top of Bishops' Court, a door or two round the bend of it and facing the wall of Lincoln's Inn, was Krook's Rag and Bottle shop. Richard Carstone, Ada, and Esther Summerson went there with little Miss Flyte, who lived over it, and they lingered outside examining the amazing litter of rubbish heaped in the window :

" As it was still foggy and dark, and as the shop was blinded besides by the wall of Lincoln's Inn, intercepting the light within a couple of yards, we should not have seen so much but for a lighted lantern that an old man in spectacles and a hairy cap was carrying about in the shop." Miss Flyte " lived at the top of the house in a pretty large room, from which she had a glimpse of the roof of Lincoln's Inn Hall." A lodger on a lower floor was the mysterious, im-

pecunious law-writer known as "Nemo;" he died there, and an inquest was held upon him at a tavern a few doors away; but the tavern vanished from the top corner of Chichester Rents a short time ago. The newspaper reports of this inquest led Lady Dedlock to finding Poor Jo, who had been one of the witnesses, at his crossing, and paying him to take her round to all the places "Nemo" had been connected with: to Mr. Snagsby's, in Took's Court, Cursitor Street; to Krook's shop; and to that dreadful old graveyard in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane where the dead man was buried.

Cursitor Street is on the other side of Chancery Lane, nearer to Holborn, and you may still see Took's Court in it (which Dickens thinly disguises as Cook's Court), and there are three or four dingily respectable old Georgian houses near the Cursitor Street end of it, one of which was certainly the house in which Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer, carried on his business, and was visited by Mr. Chadband.

Out of Carey Street, Bell Yard slopes down into Fleet Street again, and it was to an attic over a chandler's shop in Bell Yard that Esther Summerson went with Mr. Jarndyce and Harold Skimpole to see the Coavines children. The lower end of the Yard flows into Fleet Street at the point where it joins the Strand, and where Temple Bar stood in the days of David Copperfield, who came down the Strand with Mr. Peggotty, "through Temple Bar, into the City," when they were looking for the outcast Martha in the hope that she could give them news about the lost Little Em'ly; and in the days when Rawdon Crawley, of *Vanity Fair*, was arrested for debt, and

" finished his cigar as the cab drove under Temple Bar," carrying him to the sponging house of Mr. Moss, which was in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane; where also was the sponging house with which Coavines (otherwise Neckett) of Bell Yard was connected.

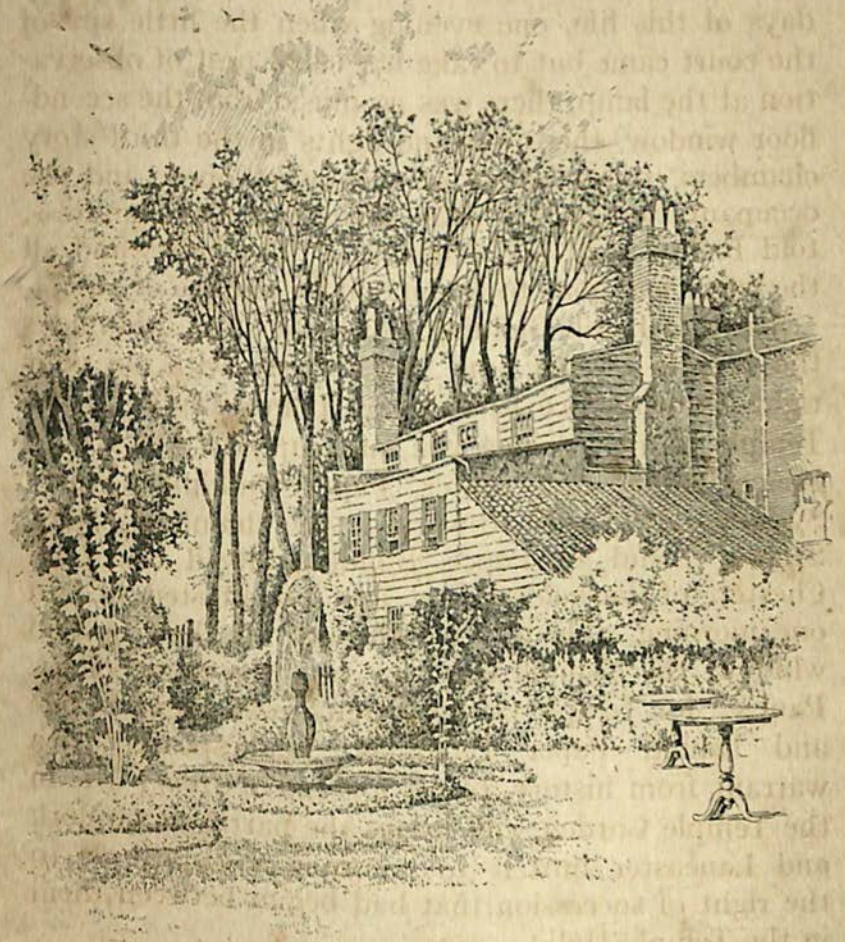
We won't go into the Temple by the Middle Temple Lane archway, but by the more eastern arch which gives on Goldsmith Buildings where, once upon a time, the reader of *Our Mutual Friend* might, like Mr. Boffin, have found the chambers of Mortimer Lightfoot and Eugene Wrayburn, if he had " wandered disconsolately about the Temple until he stumbled on a dismal churchyard, and had looked up at the dismal windows commanding that churchyard until at the most dismal window of them all he saw a dismal boy "—the window being on the second floor, and the boy Lightfoot's only clerk. The churchyard, in which Goldsmith was buried, is that of the Temple Church, at which Captain Face, in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, desired Surly, the gambler, to meet him; and to which Pendennis and Clive Newcome went one Sunday with Rosey to see the tombs of the Knights Templars. Immediately past the Church is Lamb Court; and in Lamb Building Pendennis had chambers on the third floor. Major Pendennis sent his man Morgan there with a note for Pendennis, and when he returned, the Major asked from behind his bed-curtains in his lodging in Bury Street, St. James's, " What sort of a place is it, Morgan? " " I should say rayther a shy place," said Mr. Morgan. " The lawyers lives there, and has their names on the doors. Mr. Harthur lives three pair high, sir. Mr. Warrington lives there too, sir. . . . Honly saw the outside of the door, sir,

with Mr. Warrington's name and Mr. Arthur's painted up, and a piece of paper with 'Back at 6;' but I couldn't see no servant, sir." "Economical at any rate," said the Major. "Very, sir. Three pair, sir. Nasty black staircase as ever I see." At different times, the old Major, Captain Costigan, and Harry Foker climbed these stairs to see them. One evening, after Pendennis had resolved that he must break off his friendship with little Fanny Bolton, daughter of the gatekeeper of Shepherd's Inn (which was really Clement's Inn), he happened to meet Fanny and her two small sisters with their mother in Temple Gardens; it was a slightly agitated meeting, and he presently left them there and returned home. "When the gardens were closed, the two women, who had had but a melancholy evening's amusement, walked sadly away with the children, and they entered into Lamb Court and stood under the lamp-post which cheerfully ornaments the centre of that quadrangle, and looked up to the third floor of the house where Pendennis's chambers were, and where they saw a light presently kindled. Then these couple of fools went away, the children dragging wearily after them." When Pendennis was laid up dangerously ill there, Fanny gained admission and remained to nurse him, until his mother and Laura, the cousin who loved him, came from the country, ousted the tearful little nurse resentfully, and shared her duties between them. Thereafter, when he was convalescent, they had music and singing up there in his room or the rooms of a friend on the floor below, and "I wonder how that poor pale little girl in the black bonnet, who used to stand at the lamp-post in Lamb Court sometimes of an evening,

looking up at the open windows from which the music came, liked to hear it ? . . . At last, after about ten days of this life, one evening when the little spy of the court came out to take her usual post of observation at the lamp, there was no music from the second-floor window, there were no lights in the third story chambers, the windows of each were open, and the occupants were gone. Mrs. Flanagan, the laundress, told Fanny what had happened. The ladies and all the party had gone to Richmond for change of air."

South of Lamb Building, down the steps and under the Temple Library, and you are out, with, on your right, Crown Office Row, where Lamb was born, the Temple Gardens facing you, and on your left King's Bench Walk, and, nearer, Paper Buildings, where Sydney Carton used to work, in the chambers of Mr. Stryver; and in Paper Buildings lived Sir John Chester, of *Barnaby Rudge*, and breakfasted in bed one morning, able to see "through the half opened window, the Temple Garden," and the dome of St. Paul's; for Temple Garden stretches all along beside and behind Paper Buildings. Shakespeare, with warrant from history, places a scene of *Henry VI.* in the Temple Garden, and brings the partizans of York and Lancaster into it to continue a dispute as to the right of succession that had begun between them in the Temple Hall:

Plantagenet. Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence ?
Dare no man answer in a case of truth ?
Suffolk. Within the Temple hall we were too loud ;
The garden here is more convenient.
Plantagenet. Then say at once if I maintained the truth,



The Spaniards Hampstead
from the Garden
Fred^k Adcock

"Mrs. Bardell, of 'Pickwick,' went with Master Bardell and a party of friends to take the air and have refreshment in the pleasant tea-garden of 'The Spaniards.'"

Chapter 13

Or else was wrangling Somerset in the error? . . .
Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to speak,
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts:
Let him that is a true-born gentleman
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this brier pluck a white rose with me.
Somerset. Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.
Warwick. I love no colours, and without all colour
Of base insinuating flattery,
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet
Suffolk. I pluck this red rose with young Somerset,
And say withal I think he held the right. . . .
Warwick. . . . I prophesy, this brawl to-day,
Grown to this faction in the Temple Garden,
Shall send between the red rose and the white
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

"Fashion has long deserted the green and pretty Temple Garden, in which Shakespeare makes York and Lancaster to pluck the innocent white and red roses which became the badges of their bloody wars," writes Thackeray in *Pendennis*. ". . . Only antiquarians and literary amateurs care to look at the gardens with much interest, and fancy good Sir Roger de Coverley and Mr. Spectator with his short face pacing up and down the road; or dear Oliver Goldsmith, in the summer-house, perhaps, meditating about the next 'Citizen of the World.' . . . Treading heavily on the gravel, and rolling majestically along in a snuff-coloured suit, and a wig that sadly wants the barber's powder and irons, one sees the Great Doctor step up to him (his Scotch lackey following at the lexicographer's heels, a little the worse for port wine that they had been taking at the Mitre) and Mr. Johnson asks Mr. Goldsmith to come home and take a dish of tea with him. Kind faith of Fancy! Sir Roger and Mr. Spectator are as real to us now as the two doctors and the boozy and faithful

Scotchman. The poetical figures live in our memory just as much as the real personages—and as Mr. Arthur Pendennis was of a romantic and literary turn, by no means addicted to the legal pursuits common in the neighbourhood of the place, we may presume that he was cherishing some such poetical reflections as these, when, upon the evening after the events recorded in the last chapter, the young gentleman chose the Temple Gardens as a place for exercise and meditations."

And there met Fanny Bolton, with her sisters and mother, as we have seen already. Both Goldsmith, and, later, Thackeray, lived at 2 Brick Court; and at the extreme western end of the Garden, Pip and Herbert Pocket, of *Great Expectations*, shared chambers "at the top of the last house" in Garden Court, and thither and up the dark staircase to those rooms went Abel Magwitch, the returned convict, that black and rainy night when he disclosed the fact that he was Pip's secret benefactor, and was hurt that the disclosure should humilitate Pip and horrify him. Up the steps from Garden Court, and you are in Fountain Court, which is close by the beautiful old Hall of the Temple, in which Shakespeare is said to have read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to Queen Elizabeth, at one of the Benchers' stately festivals. After Mr. Pecksniff had discharged Tom Pinch, and he was cataloguing books in one of the dimmest courts of the Temple, and residing out Islington way, with his sister Ruth to keep house for him, "there was a little plot between them that Tom should always come out of the Temple by one way; and that was past the fountain. Coming through Fountain Court, he was just to glance down the steps leading into Garden

Court, and to look once all round him ; and if Ruth had come to meet him, there he would see her." Once, as she lingered there, she caught sight of John Westlock, and in a panic of shyness ran off down the steps, but John followed and " overtook her in the sanctuary of Garden Court," and they waited until Tom joined them, and then all walked home together ; and you may know they went by Middle Temple Lane, because it is recorded that Tom made a joke, and stopped under the arch of Temple Bar to laugh. Ruth and John Westlock came to the Fountain by themselves on the day John told her that he loved her, and stopping there " it was quite natural—nothing could be more so—that they should glance down Garden Court ; because Garden Court ends in the Garden, and the Garden ends in the river, and that glimpse is very bright and fresh and shining on a summer day."

The Garden does not end in the river now, because the Embankment has been built between them and stretches from Blackfriars Bridge, in a stony corner against which poor Jo, of *Bleak House*, sat to gnaw at the broken meats Mr. Snagsby had given him, " looking up at the great Cross on the summit of St. Paul's Cathedral," and ends at Westminster Bridge, having on its river-edge, almost midway between the two Bridges, the worn, cryptic Cleopatra's Needle guarded by the figure of the Sphinx that set Robert Buchanan dreaming :

> Not on the desert sands, with lions roaring around her,
> Seeking their timid prey in pools of the bright moonrise,
> But here by the glimmering Thames, in silence of dreams profounder,

Crouches the Shape of Stone, winged, with wondrous eyes. . . .
Ancient of days, she was crouching like this ere Christ was created,
Watching the things that are fled, seeing the things that are fated. . . .

CHAPTER XI

THE STRAND AND WESTMINSTER

LAMB loved " the pavements of the motley Strand, crowded with to and fro passengers," especially after its lamps were lit : so he wrote to Robert Lloyd, and in one of his minor essays he says, " often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into the crowded Strand and fed my humour, till the tears have wetted my cheek for unutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture which she never fails to present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime." " Is any night-walk comparable," he asks in a letter to Manning, " to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross ? " And writing to Wordsworth of his love for London and his walks at night about her teeming streets, he says, " I often shed tears in the Strand from fulness of joy in so much life." Dr. Johnson agreed with Boswell that Fleet Street always had " a very animated appearance, but," he added, " I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross."

Could they return to it, they would find the character of the Strand unchanged in these respects, so it is fitting everyway that it should also be more crowded with imaginary people than any other street in London. Most of it has been widened ; Butcher Row, which had a coffee-shop that Johnson used to frequent, has

been replaced by the Law Courts, but it retains yet a few of its old houses, and some of its ancient by-ways, such as Devereux Court, Strand Lane, and the steep, narrow George Court that you enter down a flight of steps. Ralph, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, was "'prentice to a grocer in the Strand"; he appears in one scene dressed as a May-lord and singing:

> And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
> With gilded staff, and crossed scarf, the May-lord here I stand.

That was when a may-pole stood in the Strand, opposite Somerset House, before St. Mary-le-Strand was built there. All the scenes of Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure* are laid in the Strand, mostly in the houses of Sir Thomas Bornwell, or of Celestina, a young widow, who rebukes her Steward when he would check her extravagance:

> My entertainments shall
> Be oftener, and more rich. Who shall control me?
> I live i' the Strand, whither few ladies come
> To live, and purchase more than fame. I will
> Be hospitable, then, and spare no cost
> That may engage all generous report
> To trumpet forth my bounty and my bravery,
> Till the Court envy, and remove. I'll have
> My house the academy of wits, who shall
> Exalt their genius with rich sack and sturgeon,
> Write panegyrics of my feasts, and praise
> The method of my witty superfluities.
> The horses shall be taught, with frequent waiting
> Upon my gates, to stop in their career
> Toward Charing Cross, spite of the coachman's fury;
> And not a tilter but shall strike his plume,

> When he sails by my window ; my balcony
> Shall be the courtier's idol, and more gazed at
> Than all the pageantry at Temple Bar
> By country clients.

The carriages and the tilters going by towards Charing Cross would be on their way to the Court, which was then at Whitehall. Master Heriot rode that way on his mule, in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, past the lordly mansions of the Strand, past Charing Cross, " which was no longer the pleasant solitary village at which the judges were wont to breakfast on their way to Westminster Hall," and so round to the Palace of James I, in Whitehall. If you have read *The Heart of Midlothian*, you will know that when Jeanie Deans came to London she stayed with her friend Mrs. Glass, who kept a fashionable snuff-shop in the Strand ; and in the Strand lived Miss La Creevy—the miniature painter: Mrs. Nickleby, with Nicholas and Kate, lodged with her there when they first came up from the country.

All up and down the Strand go the people of Gissing's *Town Traveller, In the Year of Jubilee, The Nether World, and The Unclassed.* Ida Starr, in *The Unclassed*, brought Wymark with her one evening from under the Pall Mall colonnade, to her home. " She led the way into the Strand. At no great distance from Temple Bar she turned into a small court." This was Thanet Place ; it was a cul de sac, a blank wall at the end shutting it off from the Temple, and its two rows of trim neat houses, with creepers growing over them, with their small-paned windows, the two white steps before their little green, brass-knockered front doors, looked like a quiet old street

in some little country town. A London book published last year tells us that Thanet Place is still there, but its entrance is so narrow that nearly everybody passes without noticing it. I knew it very well, but it was wiped out some years ago; if it is still there I am one of those who are unable to find it, or we would go there, for Wymark went so frequently, and some of the most poignant things in Gissing's book happened in Ida Starr's obscure, small dwelling there.

When Jack, in Foote's *Lame Lover*, is recommending Charles Woodford to his sister, he assures her that "Mrs Congo, at the Grecian coffee-house, says he's the soberest youth that comes to the house." If you go up Devereux Court, also opposite the Law Courts, you may see all that is left of the Grecian—the bust of Lord Devereux stands above its door, as it stood above the door of the house when Addison and Steele and their friends frequented it. Across the road, beside the Law Courts, is a remnant of Clement's Inn, a small and mangled remnant, all unlike the Clement's Inn of old houses and pleasant gardens of which Fanny Bolton's father was one of the gatekeepers; and all unlike the Clement's Inn that was known to Falstaff and Justice Shallow. "I was once of Clement's Inn," Shallow boasts to his cousin Silence; "where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet;" he reminds Falstaff, when the fat knight comes to him for recruits, of the cunning little fellow he had seen fencing at Mile End Green, in the old days when he "lay at Clement's Inn;" and still bragging of the wild life he lived there he sighs, "Ha! cousin Silence, that thou hads't seen that that this knight and I have seen. Ha! Sir John, said I well?" "We

have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow," Falstaff answers darkly, but to Bardolph he subsequently confides, "Lord, Lord! how subject we old men are to this vice of lying. This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turks tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring."

In the middle of the road, before Clement's Inn, is the Church of St. Clement Danes. They were not the chimes of this church that Falstaff and Shallow had heard at midnight, for it was rebuilt in the seventeenth century; but there has been a church here since the eleventh century; and this present church is the one at which Dr. Johnson was a regular attendant, and his pew is to be seen within it. Clement's Inn spread over much of the ground that is covered by Aldwich; Mr. Gudge, of Albert Smith's *Christopher Tadpole*, had his chambers in a court in the heart of it, one end of which was "entirely taken up with a large hall, with steps, and a door, and such a knocker! evidently intended for the use of some ogre residing there, who lives entirely upon broiled clients, garnished with fricassed indentures." He describes the garden, with the ornaments adorning it, that are "compromises between monumental urns and fancy flower-pots. The figure in the middle is the greatest compromise of all. The original artist evidently conceived a great idea, but got hazy in his mind as to the proper way of carrying it out; and so, vaccilating feebly between a statue and a fountain and a sun-dial, he effected a

compromise between all three. As it is, the figure is typical of the intelligent negro, who, crouching down in an attitude of supplication, whilst he balances a sun-dial on his head—in the infantile attitude of 'hot pies'—implies that although he is a man and a brother, he is quite up to the time of day." This one authentic relic of the old Clement's Inn still survives, and you may see it where it has been re-erected in Temple Garden.

Aldwych also replaces Holywell Street, and Wych Street, where you find Jack Sheppard, in Ainsworth's romance, serving his apprenticeship; but if you walk round Aldwych you will still come to Drury Lane, where Dick Swiveller lodged over a tobacconist's, involved in monetary difficulties which he explained to Fred Trent, when Fred called upon him there. He sent out to order dinner in for both of them, and afterwards made a careful note in his pocket-book, remarking, in response to Fred's sneer at his ostentation of business: "I enter in this little book the names of the streets that I can't go down while the shops are open. This dinner to-day closes Long Acre. I bought a pair of boots in Queen Street last week, and made that no thoroughfare too. There's only one avenue to the Strand left open now, and I shall have to stop up that to-night with a pair of gloves. The roads are closing so fast in every direction that, in about a month's time, unless my aunt sends me a remittance, I shall have to go three or four miles out of town to get over the way."

Back in the Strand, on the other side of St. Clement's church, are Essex Street and Norfolk Street; in Essex Street Dr. Johnson had one of his many clubs

at the Essex Head, and Charley Tudor, a clerk at Somerset House, in Trollope's *Three Clerks*, "had his house of call in a cross lane running between Essex Street and Norfolk Street." He was in and out of the place a good deal, and foolishly became affianced to the barmaid there. Trollope calls it "The Cat and Whistle," but I am inclined to think it was the Old Cheshire Cheese, an old tavern, in a cross lane between Essex Street and Norfolk Street, that no writer on London ever says anything about. Higher up the Strand is Somerset House, where Charley Tudor was a clerk, and where Mr. Minns, of Dickens's first story, *Mr. Minns and his Cousin*, was a clerk before him. But long before either of them, in the days of Charles II, Pepys was a frequent visitor at Somerset House, when the Queen Mother had her palace there; and a decade or so before Pepys went there, when it was Queen Henrietta Maria's dower house, Randolph walked in its grounds,

Where glittering courtiers in their tissues stalked,

and witnessed an incident which he describes in his verses, "On a Maid seen by a Scholar in Somerset House Garden."

Mr Gammon, in Gissing's *Town Traveller*, loved to ride down the Strand on a bus. "He enjoyed a 'block,' and was disappointed unless he saw the policeman at Wellington Street holding up his hand whilst the cross traffic from north and south rolled gradually through. It always reminded him of the Bible story—Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea." One day by chance, Miss Waghorn and her young man, Mr. Nibby, climbed on to the same bus

and sat behind him; Miss Waghorn hailed him, and introduced the two gentlemen, and, "the bus drawing slowly near a popular wine shop," on Mr. Nibby's suggestion they all got down and turned into that shop, where "the dark narrow space before the counter or bar was divided off with wooden partitions as at a pawnbroker's; each compartment had a high stool for the luxuriously inclined, and along the wall ran a bare wooden bench." From which description one easily recognises Short's, which is opposite Somerset House. Wellington Street runs south to Waterloo Bridge, which was Hood's Bridge of Sighs; and north, past the bow fronted office in which Dickens used to edit *Household Words* (with the Lyceum opposite, as he mentions in one of his reprinted articles); past Maiden Lane, where Turner was born over his father's barber shop against Hand Court, and where Thackeray's Philip went to a concert at the Cyder Cellars, being tired of the opera at Covent Garden; by Russell Street, where Lamb and his sister lived, where still remains something of Will's famous coffee-house, to which the wits went to meet Dryden, and in which Lytton puts a scene of his *Not So Bad As We Seem*—Russell Street, where Johnson first met Boswell at No. 8, and where, long before that, the Rose tavern used to stand, to which Shirley refers in his play, *Hyde Park*, when Lord Bonvile reassures Julietta that Venture and Bonavent, who have gone away from them breathing fire and slaughter, will not fight, but that

> A cup of sack, and Anthony at the Rose
> Will reconcile their furies;

—and so into Bow Street.

Wycherley, who lived on the west side of Bow Street, places a scene of his *Plain Dealer* at The Cock there. The police-station fills the site of the house in which, first, Waller lived, and afterwards Fielding, whilst he was writing *Tom Jones*. In one of the *Sketches by Boz* the ubiquitous Dickens pictures the prisoners being taken away from Bow Street station in the prison van; and at Bow Street, as you may read at full in *Oliver Twist*, the Artful Dodger was brought up before the magistrate on a charge of pocket-picking and committed for trial, Noah Claypole, under Fagin's directions, being among the audience, disguised as a countryman, to witness what happened. Mr. Bows, of *Pendennis*, was "employed as pianoforte player, to accompany the eminent lyrical talent which nightly delighted the public at the Fielding's Head in Covent Garden: and where was held a little club called the Back Kitchen. Numbers of Pen's friends frequented this very merry meeting. The Fielding's Head had been a house of entertainment almost since the time when the famous author of *Tom Jones* presided as magistrate in the neighbouring Bow Street." When Lord Castlewood and Lord Mohun quarrelled in the Greyhound, at Charing Cross, and went away to fight that fatal duel in Leicester Fields (which is now Leicester Square) it was given out, so as to allay suspicion of their purpose, that "the dispute was over now, and the parties were all going away to my Lord Mohun's house in Bow Street, to drink a bottle more before going to bed."

Mr. Minns, to whom we have recently referred, lived for twenty years in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, continually falling out with his landlord,

giving him notice to quit on the first day of every quarter and as regularly countermanding it on the second. The old man who begins the story of *The Old Curiosity Shop* was fond of roaming through Covent Garden at sunrise, "in the spring or summer, when the fragrance of sweet flowers is in the air, overpowering even the unwholesome steams of last night's debauchery and driving the dusky thrush, whose cage has hung outside a garret window all night long, half mad with joy." Ruth and Tom Pinch, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, used to enjoy wandering about the great markets, and "many and many a pleasant stroll they had in Covent Garden, snuffling up the perfume of the fruits and flowers, wondering at the magnificence of the pine-apples and melons; catching glimpses down side avenues of rows and rows of old women seated on inverted baskets shelling peas;" when David Copperfield, working at the Blacking Factory in Blackfriars Road, took his half hour off for tea and had no money, he strolled "as far as Covent Garden Market, and stared at the pine-apples;" and later, after his aunt had made him a young man of means and he was lodging with Mrs. Crupp, in Buckingham Street, Strand, he came and "bought a little dessert in Covent Garden," in preparation for that dinner to which Steerforth and his friend Grainger were coming. It was shortly before that, when he and Steerforth both happened to be staying the night at the Golden Cross Hotel, in the Strand, that they went together and saw Julius Caesar acted at the Covent Garden Theatre.

"One brilliant September morning, as Huxter," of *Pendennis*, "was regaling himself with a cup of

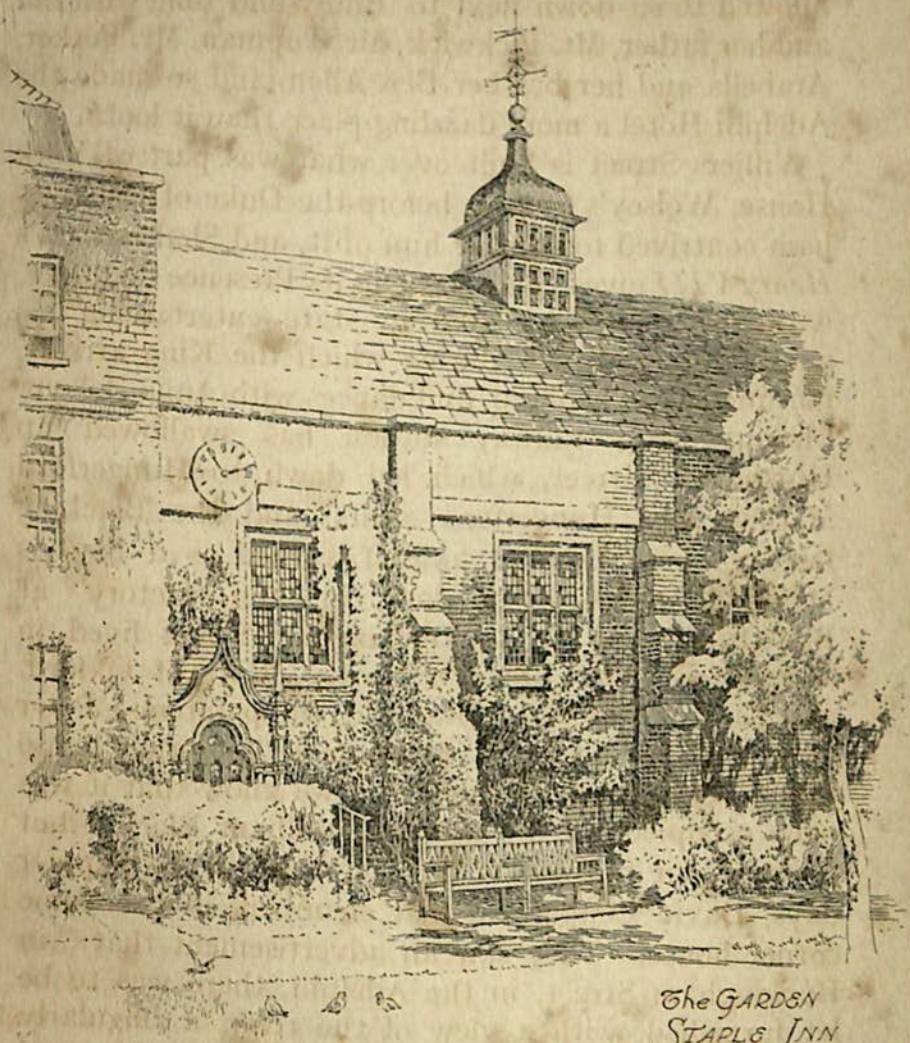
coffee at a stall in Covent Garden, having spent a delicious night dancing at Vauxhall," he saw Captain Costigan "reeling down Henrietta Street, with a crowd of hooting blackguard boys at his heels: he "dived down the alleys by Drury Lane Theatre," making for Clements Inn where he had his chambers. Warrington, of *The Virginians*, lodged and entertained his friends at the Bedford Head, which is in Covent Garden, at the corner of Henrietta Street; there was an early morning when Dr. Johnson arrived in Covent Garden, "on a frolic," with Beauclerk and other of his friends, and joyously insisted on helping the porters to unload their carts; and Wycherley, Farquhar, and other playwrights before and after them have laid more scenes in Covent Garden than I can remember.

In Cecil Street, Strand, which made way for part of the Hotel Cecil, lived Dickens himself, for a while; and he put Mr. Watkins Tottle, of the *Sketches by Boz*, to lodge in a small parlour in the same street. Just up Adam Street, is the Adelphi Hotel, that is associated with an important incident in *Pickwick*. Here Emily Wardle and her father stayed, when they came to town, and Mr. Snodgrass, calling whilst old Wardle, was out, made timorous but successful love to Emily, and was departing when he heard Mr. Wardle and a party of guests coming up the stairs, ran back in a panic, lost his way in the passages, and concealed himself in Mr. Wardle's bedroom. The fat boy, sent in for something else, discovered him there and inadvertently betrayed him, and after an outburst of wrath against his deception, Mr. Wardle not only forgave him and consented to his suit, but he was

allowed to sit down next to Emily and dine with her and her father, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Perker, Arabella and her brother Ben Allen, and so made the Adelphi Hotel a more dazzling place than it looks.

Villiers Street is built over what was part of York House, Wolsey's Palace, before the Duke of Buckingham contrived to deprive him of it, and Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* gives you a scene in its Presence Chamber, with the Cardinal seated in state entertaining his guests at a banquet, during which the King arrives, masqued as a shepherd, and dances with Anne Boleyn. Charing Cross railway station has swallowed up Hungerford Street, which led down to Hungerford Market, and Hungerford Stairs, and the Blacking factory where Dickens himself worked as a boy, as David Copperfield worked in the factory at Blackfriars. At No. 14, Buckingham Street lived, in succession, Pepys, Swift's Harley, Earl of Oxford, and Etty and Clarkson Stanfield, the painters. Peter the Great is said to have occupied the corner house immediately opposite this: and we know that it was once occupied by the novelist, William Black; but more to our purpose is the fact that, in his happier days, David Copperfield had chambers in this same corner house. They saw an advertisement that "in Buckingham Street, in the Adelphi, there was to be let furnished, with a view of the river, a singularly desirable and compact set of chambers;" and he and his Aunt, Betsy Trotwood, promptly went to look at them:

"The advertisement directed us to apply to Mrs Crupp on the premises, and we rang the area bell, which we supposed to communicate with Mrs Crupp. It was not until we had



The GARDEN
STAPLE INN
Fred^k Adcock

"It is one of those nooks that are legal nooks; and it contains a little Hall with a lantern in its roof." "Edwin Drood."

Chapter 13

rung three or four times that we could prevail on Mrs. Crupp to communicate with us, but at last she appeared, being a stout lady with a flounce of flannel petticoat below a nankeen gown.

"'Let us see these chambers of yours, if you please, ma'am,' said my aunt.

"'For this gentleman?' said Mrs. Crupp, feeling in her pocket for the keys.

"'Yes, for my nephew,' said my aunt.

"'And a sweet set they is for sich!' said Mrs. Crupp.

"So we went upstairs. They were on the top of the house —a great point with my aunt, being near the fire-escape— and consisted of a little half-blind entry where you could see hardly anything, a little stone-blind pantry where you could see nothing at all, a sitting-room and a bed-room. The furniture was rather faded, but quite good enough for me; and, sure enough, the river was outside the windows."

Thence went David Copperfield every day to walk along the Strand to Mr. Spenlow's office in Doctor's Commons; in these rooms he entertained Steerforth, and Uriah Heep, whom he led, by his damp, cold hand "up the dark stairs, to prevent him knocking his head against anything;" here he gave a notable feast to Mr. and Mrs. Micawber and Traddles, and when they departed, towards midnight, he held his candle "over the banisters to light them down." Here he had Mr. Dick to stay with him, and, to wean him from his endless task on the Memorial into which King Charles's head invariably intruded, Traddles found work for him, and Mr. Dick used to sit at "a table by the window in Buckingham Street" copying legal documents; here David's aunt came to live with him after she had lost her money, and of an evening Traddles would read famous political speeches out of

Enfield's Speaker whilst David took them down in shorthand, bent on learning that art, and his aunt and Mr. Dick sat and listened and added to the realistic reproduction of a Parliamentary debate by throwing in an occasional "Hear! Hear!" One could go on with similar reminiscences. "There was an old Roman Bath in those days at the bottom of one of the streets out of the Strand—it may be there still—in which I had many a cold plunge," says David; and if you go into the uneven, precipitous Strand Lane, a few yards east of Somerset House, you will find that Roman Bath there to this hour. Remembering these things, and how whilst he sojourned in Buckingham Street David Copperfield was distracted with love for Dora Spenlow, agitated over the tragedy of Steerforth's treachery, and Little Em'ly's disappearance, going out to meet Mr. Peggotty, and help him in his vain search for her—remembering all these things and such other minute details of David's everyday life, we are as strongly drawn to this house as if it were Dickens who had actually inhabited it and not only the people of his imagination.

Mr. Brownlow, of *Oliver Twist*, was staying at a house in Craven Street, which is the last street but one on this side, near the top of the Strand, when Oliver found him and was restored to him by Rose Mayley; and the last street of all, Northumberland Street, when it was named Hartshorn Lane, contained the house in which Ben Jonson passed his boyhood.

A little way back, over the road, is the Golden Cross Hotel, which has been rebuilt. It is nowadays a large and stately edifice, but when David Copperfield put up there, with Steerforth, it was "a mouldy sort

of establishment." Through Steerforth's intervention he was transferred from a small bed-chamber which had been shut up like a family vault to a comfortable, large front room, from the window of which next morning he had a view of the statue of King Charles on horseback, which still stands at Charing Cross looking down Whitehall. Albert Smith's Christopher Tadpole put up at that earlier Golden Cross; and, to say nothing of others, thither went Mr. Pickwick in a cab, which he chartered from St. Martin's le Grand, and when he alighted there the cabman wanted to fight him outside on the pavement over the amount of his fare, but was prevented by the timely appearance of Mr. Jingle, who afterwards went inside with Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Winkle and Mr. Tupman, who had been waiting there for their chief, and being duly refreshed they all mounted the coach and set out from the Golden Cross on that eventful journey to Rochester.

Suckling begins his *Ballad of a Wedding*, with a reference to the adjacent Haymarket:

> At Charing Cross, hard by the way
> Where we, thou know'st, do sell our hay;

Lewis Morris singing of Trafalgar Square, which opens from the Strand and Charing Cross, sketches the crippled beggar who sat "under the picture gallery wall,"

> A face as pale as the sheeted dead,
> A frail body propped on a padded crutch,
> And lean long fingers, which flutter the keys
> Of an old accordion;

but Henley gives the finest picture of the place, on a golden day of October, when

> Trafalgar Square
> (The fountains volleying golden glaze)
> Shines like an angel-market. High aloft
> Over his couchant Lions in a haze
> Shimmering and bland and soft,
> A dust of chrysoprase,
> Our Sailor takes the golden gaze
> Of the saluting sun, and flames superb
> As once he flamed it on his ocean round.
> The dingy dreariness of the picture-place,
> Turned very nearly bright,
> Takes on a luminous transiency of grace,
> And shows no more a scandal to the ground.
> The very blind man pottering on the kerb,
> Among the posies and the ostrich feathers
> And the rude voices touched with all the weathers
> Of the long, varying year,
> Shares in the universal alms of light.

Up beside the picture-place, which is the National Gallery, runs St. Martin's Lane, and down St. Martin's Lane, one snowy, wintry evening, came David Copperfield, on his way home from Highgate to Buckingham Street.

"Now, the church which gives its name to the Lane, stood in a less free situation at that time; there being no open space before it, and the lane winding down to the Strand. As I passed the steps of the portico, I encountered at the corner a woman's face. It looked in mine, passed across the narrow lane, and disappeared. I knew it. I had seen it somewhere. But I could not remember where. . . . On the steps of the church, there was the stooping figure of a man who had put down some burden on the smooth snow to adjust it; my seeing the face, and my seeing him were simultaneous. . . .

As I went on, he rose, turned and came down towards me. I stood face to face with Mr Peggotty! Then I remembered the woman. It was Martha, to whom Emily had given the money that night in the kitchen. Martha Endell—side by side with whom he would not have seen his dear niece, Ham told me, for all the treasures wrecked in the sea. We shook hands heartily. At first, neither of us could speak a word.

"'Mas'r Davy!' he said, gripping me tight, 'it do my art good to see you, sir. Well met, well met!"

They went for shelter, by a back way, into the Golden Cross, where Mr. Peggotty recounted his wanderings about the world, trying to get on the track of Steerforth and the girl he had taken away with him.

Young Ferdinand, in Disraeli's *Henrietta Temple*, came to London with Mr. Glastonbury, and a hackney coach carried them from Bishopsgate to Charing Cross and deposited them at Morley's Hotel, which Disraeli speaks of as in Cockspur Street, but it is now in Trafalgar Square; and next morning the two came out together to see the town, Ferdinand talking all the way, wild with excitement:

"Is this Charing Cross, sir?—I wonder if we shall ever be able to get over.—Is this the fullest part of the town, sir?—What a fine day, sir!—How lucky we are in the weather!—. . . Who is that?—What is this?—The Admiralty? Oh, let me see the Admiralty!—The Horse Guards!—Oh, where, where?—Let us set our watches by the Horse Guards.—Mr. Glastonbury, which is the best clock, the Horse Guards' or St Paul's?—Is that the Treasury?—Can we go in?—That is Downing Street, is it?—Is this Charing Cross still, or is it Parliament Street?—Where does Charing Cross end, and where does Parliament Street begin?—By Jove, I see Westminster Abbey!"

Downing Street, the Government offices, and Carlton Terrace on the other side of the way, have associations with Trollope's great novel, *The Prime Minister*, but since we have come as far as the Abbey we will not go back for them, nor for one or two reminiscences of Spring Gardens and Cannon Row, nor for many of Whitehall, that looms so large in a hundred and one Carolian and Cromwellian plays and romances. Even more and older memories are gathered about this Westminster area, that is covered by Westminster Hall, the Houses of Parliament, and the Abbey; which have all, except the Abbey, been rebuilt within the last hundred years. These are not the Parliamentary buildings that Hugh and Dennis, the hangman, came lurking round, in *Barnaby Rudge*, when Dennis pointed out "how easy it was to get into the lobby and so to the very door of the House of Commons." This is not the Westminster Hall that Shakespeare knew; nor the one in which Wycherley has a scene of his *Plain Dealer*; nor the one to which Mr. Haredale came (again in *Barnaby Rudge*) and met Sir John Chester and Mr. Gashford among the miscellaneous throng that flowed in and out through its lofty doorway; but it is the Hall in which Alaric Tudor and Undy Scott, of Trollope's *Three Clerks*, talked of the ruin the unscrupulous Undy had brought upon his friend, till Alaric came near to losing his self-control and resorting to violence. They walked "up and down the immense space of Westminster Hall," Undy explaining what had been passing within on the Parliamentary Committee of which he was a member, and at the crisis of the interview, when Alaric took hold of him by the collar of his coat, were "standing

at the upper end of the Hall—close under the steps which lead to the House of Parliament."

If you go round the side of the Abbey, by Great Smith Street, you may find your way easily into Smith Square; and in "Church Street, Smith Square, Mill Bank," Lizzie Hexam, of *Our Mutual Friend*, lived, with Jenny Wren, the crippled little doll's dressmaker. Bradley Headstone and Charley Hexam called there to see her, crossing the Westminster Bridge and making along the Middlesex shore towards Millbank:

"In this region are a certain little street, called Church Street, and a certain little blind square, called Smith Square, in the centre of which last retreat is a very hideous church with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its legs in the air. They found a tree near by in a corner, and a blacksmith's forge, and a timber yard, and a dealer's in old iron. What a rusty portion of a boiler and a great iron wheel or so meant by lying half-buried in the dealer's forecourt, nobody seemed to know or want to know. . . . After making the round of this place, and noting that there was a deadly kind of repose on it, more as though it had taken laudanum than fallen into a natural rest, they stopped at the point where the street and the square joined, and where there were some little quiet houses in a row. To these Charley Hexam finally led the way, and at one of these he stopped. 'This must be where my sister lives, sir. This is where she came for a temporary lodging soon after father's death.'"

He knocked; the door promptly opened with a spring, and the parlour door within, standing open, revealed Jenny Wren, the doll's dressmaker, to them —"a child—a dwarf—a girl—a something sitting in a little low old-fashioned arm-chair, which had a kind of little working bench before it." The house and all

Church Street were there until a few months ago; now they have been knocked down and carted away, but Smith Square, with the hideous church that is too large for it, the wood yard, and general litter, and the somnolent air that hangs over everything, are all as exactly the same as if Dickens had only written of them yesterday.

You make acquaintance with Smith Square again in Besant's *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice*; when Ella Burley came over from America with her Aunt Lucinda to establish their identities and prove their relationship to the multi-millionaire, James Calvert Burley, who had practised as a solicitor in England until his death in 1875. They took a lodging "in Westminster, so as to be on the spot, close to Great College Street; in fact, it was in Smith Square, where stands the huge mass of stone called the Church of St. John the Evangelist." The family of Burley had belonged to the Church of St. John "since the creation of the parish in the year 1716," and Besant compiles a pedigree of them, drawn from St. John's parish register. Ella and her Aunt were regular attendants at the church services, and you can easily identify all their walks about the locality—this, for example:

"They walked nearly round the Square, their thoughts far away. Then Ella turned into a street, for no reason, her aunt following her; and in two or three minutes they found themselves in an unexpected place—a Continental place—which brought their thoughts back to Westminster. . . . Ella looked round her, awakened by the unexpected. For she stood suddenly in the most quiet and peaceful spot of all London. Houses of the early eighteenth century, with porches, and

pillars, and flat façades, stand round this place, houses built for the comfort that our grandfathers placed so far above artistic show and æsthetic display."

This secluded street brings them into Great College Street, and in Great College Street is the house formerly occupied by the deceased millionaire, and now tenanted by the newly married Dr. Lucien Calvert and his wife, who are among the numerous claimants to the dead man's millions. Before Lucien and his wife, Margaret, took it he brought her to see the place, and—

"It was, she found, a lovely old house. Steps, side steps, with a good old iron railing, led to the stoop and to the front door. There were three stories, each with three windows; there was a steep red-tiled roof with dormer windows. Over the whole front hung a thick green curtain of Virginia creeper. . . . On the other side of the street was the old grey wall of the Cathedral precincts—did Edward the Confessor build that wall, or was it an earlier work still?—the work of Dunstan, what time His Majesty King Edgar endowed the Abbey?"

Here is another description of it, given by Lucy to her father Sir John Burley, another claimant to the estate:

"It is close to the Houses of Parliament. . . . The houses are only on one side: on the other is a grey stone wall—the garden wall of the Abbey. . . . The front of the house is covered all over with a magnificent creeper, the leaves crimson and purple and golden—it is like a glorified house. There is a red tiled roof, there is a raised door and steps and old-fashioned iron railings. . . . The street is called Great College Street."

And the beautiful old house is there exactly as all those people of *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice* saw it, and looking as if it might yet prove more lasting than

Besant's story about it. Whilst Dr. Calvert was absent every day about his duties at the Children's Hospital in Buckingham Palace Road, Margaret would go out for quiet walks "in the Park, or about the quiet courts of the Abbey;" and after she had become friendly with Ella, they would sometimes go together, and their favourite stroll took them through the obscure doorway near the end of Great College Street "into the large quiet Square called Dean's Yard;" but Margaret knew of a quieter place even than this:

"Under an archway, across an open court, through a broad arched corridor she led the girl into a little square court, surrounded by a stone cloister; in the midst was a square of grass, with a fountain that ought to have been playing but was not: tablets on the walls commemorated dead men's names and lives. . . . There were ancient doors and ancient windows of crumbling, worn stone, and above the corridor were houses which looked as if they were built what time great Oliver ruled the realm. 'This is the Infirmary Cloister,' said Margaret. 'It is the quietest place in the world. You hear nothing in these cloisters of the outside world—nothing but the striking of the great clock: you see nothing but the Victoria Tower. . . . I come here often when I am troubled. . . . Only to linger among these grey old stones soothes and comforts one.'"

Tarrant, of Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee*, took lodgings in Great College Street, when he was working as a journalist, and anxious to regain the love of his deserted wife (the one-time Nancy Lord) who was living in the neighbourhood; and his walks and sometimes hers, were in the shadow of the Houses of Parliament, in Dean's Yard, and thereabouts. Gilbert Grail, in *Thyrza*, would spend "an hour of his Saturday afternoon in Westminster Abbey;" and into the

Abbey went Walter Egremont, and sat in a shadowed place alone, distracted with his secret love for Thyrza —there in the same place where his poorer, unsuccessful rival, the working man, Gilbert Grail, "often walked and sought solace from the bitterness of his accursed lot." Margaret Calvert used to walk in the Abbey, as well as in its mouldering cloisters; and she and her husband would attend afternoon service there on Sundays. The Abbey holds memories of greater and more splendid scenes, but they are only half imaginary. A gentleman in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* describes Anne Boleyn's coronation in it; the opening scene of his *Henry VI.* is placed in it, during the funeral ceremonies of *Henry V.*; and a memorable scene of *Henry IV.* is enacted in its ancient Jerusalem Chamber.

One does not read the names of so many Kings and Queens and great men on its ageing monuments and quit what Young calls,

> That solemn mansion of the royal dead
> Where passing slaves o'er sleeping monarchs tread,

without recalling Beaumont's lines "On the Tombs in Westminster Abbey":

> Mortality, behold and fear,
> What a change of flesh is here!
> Think how many royal bones
> Sleep within this heap of stones;
> Here they lie, had realms and lands,
> Who now want strength to stir their hands;
> Where from their pulpits sealed in dust,
> They preach, 'In greatness is no trust!'
> Here's an acre sown indeed
> With the richest, royal'st seed. . . .

Here the bones of birth have cried,
'Though gods they were, as men they died;' . . .
Here's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust . . .

As Beaumont, who was himself afterwards brought here to be buried, walked through the Abbey musing of these things, so you may take it his contemporary Dr. Donne was no stranger to the place, before he wrote in one of his Satires:

'Tis sweet to talk of Kings. At Westminster,
Said I, the man that keeps the Abbey tombs
And for his price doth, with who ever comes,
Of all our Harrys and our Edwards talk,
From King to King, and all their kin, can walk:
Your ears shall hear nought but Kings; your eyes meet
Kings only. The way to it is King's Street.

And King Street is one of the ways to it still. Just outside the Abbey waited Falstaff and his Page, with Bardolph, Pistol, and Justice Shallow, whilst Henry V. was crowned within; and here, when the reformed Henry with his train came forth, he had the heart to snub his old boon companion and leave the prating Chief Justice to have Sir John and all his company arrested and carried off to the Fleet Prison.

By the Abbey is St. Margaret's church, dear to all book-lovers as the burial place of Caxton; and if you are there at the right hour, you may come away hearing, as Henley heard,

St Margaret's bells,
Quiring their innocent, old-world canticles,
Sing in the storied air
All rosy-and-golden, as with memories
Of woods at evensong, and sands and seas
Disconsolate for that the night is nigh.

CHAPTER XII

PICCADILLY AND THE PARKS

IF life were longer and books need have no limit, we would go farther up the river in the footprints of the imaginary people who haunt those parts: to Chelsea, where some of Henry Kingsley's and some of Gissing's characters lived; to Chiswick, where on the Mall, by the Thames, stands Walpole House, which is Miss Pinkerton's Academy, in *Vanity Fair*, with Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp among its inmates; to Richmond, where, to say nothing of many another, Jeanie Deans was taken to see the Queen in old Richmond Palace. But life and books being what they are, we go back instead and get on to the route that Charley Tudor, of *The Three Clerks*, took when, coming from his office in Somerset House, "he went along the Strand, over the crossing under the statue of Charles on horseback, and up Pall Mall East till he came to the opening into the Park, under the Duke of York's column." He noticed the colonnade that stretched up Pall Mall from the corner of the Haymarket, but this is gone now, or I would have quoted the vivid scene in *The Unclassed*, where Waymark leans smoking against one of its pillars and first makes acquaintance with Ida Starr there.

Or, instead of going up Pall Mall to enter it by the Duke of York's column, you can go into St. James's

Park by the Mall, out of Charing Cross, and, if the living crowd in it does not sufficiently interest you, can refill it with the real people and the dream people it has known: Nigel, who walked there and met Prince Charles with his courtiers, and presently disgraced himself by breaking into that furious affray with Lord Dalgarno in the precincts of St. James's Palace; Pepys, who loved the place, and to encounter Charles II. or his Queen, or some of the Court favourites in its pleasant grounds; those men and women of Wycherley's, who came out of his *Love in a Wood: or St. James's Park*; of Congreve's, out of his *Way of the World*; of Vanbrugh's and Farquhar's, out of various plays of theirs, for the Park was never a more fashionable or more popular place than it was in the brilliant, joyous, wicked days of the Restoration. In the Park, here, Captain Booth, the husband of Fielding's *Amelia*, would take his walks abroad, and was here on the day he met Colonel Bath with some other officers, and being insulted by the Colonel said, "If we were not in the Park I would thank you very properly for that compliment." Saying they could soon be in a convenient place,

> "The Colonel bid him come along, and strutted forward directly up Constitution Hill, to Hyde Park, Booth following him at first, and afterwards walking before him, till they came to that place which may be properly called the field of blood, being that part a little to the left of the ring, which heroes have chosen for their exit out of this world."

The Colonel took off his wig and coat and laid them on the grass; they both drew, and after a few furious passes, Booth ran him through the body, and as he lay on the ground, a few words of explanation made

it clear that he had insulted Booth under a misapprehension; they shook hands warmly, and were reconciled. The Colonel's injury was slight, but Booth insisted on running to Grosvenor Gate to fetch a chair and have him carried home. Ralph Nickleby, crossing St. James's Park from Pimlico, on his road home, was caught in a storm and took shelter under one of the trees, and was accosted there by Mr. Brooker, the broken wretch whom he had wronged.

Quite late one evening, after dining, young Everett Wharton and Ferdinand Lopez in Trollope's *Prime Minister*, "strolled out into St. James's Park;" Everett was in no pleasant humour, and as they got round in front of Buckingham Palace, they came to words, and along Birdcage Walk, near Storey's Gate, Lopez said an abrupt good-night and went off alone. It was by now dark, and having a suspicion that Everett was slightly the worse for drink, Lopez hesitated, feeling that he ought to look after him. Hearing a curious rush and scuffle in the dark behind him, he ran back to find Everett on the ground, a man kneeling on him and two women rifling his pockets. He rushed to the rescue, there was a hot, brief giving and taking of blows, and the women and the man had fled, and Everett had risen and was leaning against the railings. He was wounded and bleeding; his watch and his money were stolen. "They walked very slowly away towards the steps of the Duke of York's column. . . . At the foot of the steps they met a policeman, to whom they told their story, and who, as a matter of course, was filled with an immediate desire to arrest them both. . . . But after ten minutes' parley, during which Wharton sat

on the bottom step and Lopez explained all the circumstances, he consented to get them a cab;" and the reputation for this rescue afterwards stood the cunning Lopez in good stead with Everett's father, and particularly with his sister.

In St. James's Park, in St. James's Palace, and in St. James's Square, which lies outside, off Pall Mall, Ainsworth has scenes of his novel, *St. James's*, Tom Taylor of his dramas, *Lady Clancarty*, and *'Twixt Axe and Crown*, and Thackeray of *Esmond*. Pendennis walked with the Major "through the Green Park" (which separates St. James's from Hyde Park) "where many poor children were disporting happily, and errand boys were playing at toss halfpenny, and black sheep were grazing in the sunshine, and an actor was learning his part on a bench, and nursery maids and their charges sauntered here and there;" and from the Green Park "made their way into Grosvenor Place, and to the door of the mansion occupied there by Sir Francis and Lady Clavering."

You cannot cross from the Green Park to Hyde Park Corner without noticing Apsley House, where the great Duke of Wellington lived; Thackeray's *Philip* comes in from Hyde Park, and tells his friends in Beaunash Street, "As I passed by Apsley House, I saw the Duke come out, with his old blue frock and white trousers and clear face;" and you see the Duke somewhere else in Thackeray—I forget for the moment where—riding from Apsley House down Piccadilly. I don't think nightingales are to be heard in any of the Parks now, but in Shirley's comedy, *Hyde Park*, you have Mistress Carol, catching at the old superstition that it is lucky to hear the nightingale,

53 HATTON GARDEN.
Fred^k Adcock.

"At 53 Hatton Garden was the old police-court presided over by a Mr. Laing, an unjust and intolerant magistrate who was the original of Mr. Fang in 'Oliver Twist.'"

Chapter 13

crying out to Fairfield, as they walk in the Park together:

> Hark, sir, the nightingale; there is better luck
> Coming towards us.

You have Lacy, in the same play, urging his friends: "Prythee stay: we'll to Hyde Park together;" and Bonavent adding, "There you may meet with morris-dancers"—and that too has become a thing of the past, but "Hyde Park has still something about it of Arcadia," as Disraeli says in *Tancred*, and apart from the extravagance of its flattery there is nothing so out of date in Lord Bonvile's *Hyde Park* greeting of Julietta:

> Lady, you are welcome to the spring; the Park
> Looks fresher to salute you: how the birds
> On every tree sing with more cheerfulness
> At your access.

For how many centuries it has been the mode for society to take the air in Rotten Row I do not know; but Ben Jonson's Fitzdotterel, in *The Devil is an Ass*, proposes to buy a gilt coach that his wife and her lover may ride together in it into Hyde Park; and Randolph writes of Madame Lesbia who lavished money on a favourite young actor, so that he

> May scatter angels, rub out silks, and shine
> In cloths of gold; cry loud, 'The world is mine:'
> Keep his race-nags, and in Hyde Park be seen
> Brisk as the best.

Mr. Foker, of *Pendennis*, brooding over his vain love for Blanche Amory, "cantered away down Rotten Row, his mind agitated with various emotions,

ambitions, mortifications," and nearly ran into the roomy carriage of his Aunt Lady Rosherville, and in it with his aunt was the Lady Ann, to whom he was betrothed. George Warrington, in *The Virginians*, displeased his family by his marriage, and "walking shortly afterwards in Hyde Park with my dearest companion," he says, "I met my little cousin exercising on horseback with a groom behind him;" and in defiance of orders, the little Miles Warrington pulled up to speak with his cousin and to admire the prettiness of his cousin's wife. To be seen riding or driving in Rotten Row has been the hall-mark of social superiority since long before you and I were born; and when Mr. Gudge and his wife, in *Christopher Tadpole*, had risen in the world and went driving in Hyde Park, they were only doing what is commonly done by those who rise:

"There were all sorts of vehicles that afternoon in the Park. Heavy old family coaches, with coachmen and horses to match, and the most wonderful old ladies inside that ever were seen—equipages that crept out year after year with their panels revarnished and their brass-work relacquered . . . new barouches, blazing with escutcheons like theatrical banners, and liveries almost like the harlequins', just started by parvenus living on the borders of the exclusive world and constantly fighting to pass its frontier; mail-phaetons driven by men about town, who had gone round and round the Park for thirty years and still clung to the peculiar hats, cravats and general demeanour that distinguished them when they commenced their career, . . . There were broughdams too, with blinds half down and small dogs looking out of the window; within which might be seen faces once fair and still with sufficient beauty to attract attention."

The style of carriage has altered; there are motor-

cars among them ; and those who ride in them or on horseback have changed the fashion of their garments ; otherwise, the same stream flows by in the road, with the same types of young bloods and old dandies walking on the footpath, or lolling on the railings, day after day through the season, and there is always some social climber flowing in the stream who gazes on the gorgeous pageant from inside something finer than the hired carriage that satisfied Albert Smith's Mr. Gudge and says in his heart, as Mr. Gudge said aloud to his wife, " Well, there's a comfort in mixing with the nobs, anyhow, though you ain't one of 'em by birth."

Pendennis, in *The Newcomes*, came upon Fred Bayham in Hyde Park, " toying affably with a nursery maid who stood with some of her little charges watching the yachts upon the Serpentine," which parts Hyde Park from Kensington Gardens ; but no writer has used the Serpentine more effectively than it is used by Besant, in *The Seamy Side*. Anthony Hamblin, harrassed by financial difficulties and threatened with a certain exposure and disgrace, goes one evening to skate on the Serpentine. He gives his overcoat into the care of one of the Royal Humane Society's officers, and is standing at the edge of the ice, brooding heavily and about to fasten on his skates, when a sudden noise startles him. He glances up, and " where the people had been crowded, skating and running, Anthony gazed upon a great open space, in which a hundred and fifty people were struggling in the water among the broken blocks of ice for very life, amid the shrieks and cries of spectators helpless to do anything." In a flash, he sees a way out of his troubles. Unnoted in the general hubbub and

excitement, he slips quietly away and disappears; his coat remains unclaimed, and that night his name appears in the newspaper lists of those who had perished in the ice-accident.

With no more than a glance at Kensington Gardens, that is haunted by Leigh Hunt, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Thackeray, and his characters, and by Matthew Arnold, who mused and wrote one of his poems in them; we shall take a turn up Piccadilly, before we negotiate Park Lane on our road back to the City and the end of our tour. Piccadilly always reminds me at once of Laurence Oliphant's clever satirical novel that was named after it; there is a subtle suggestion of the world, the flesh and the devil, and all the good things of life that are so bad for us, in its very name. It is a street of riches and beauty and pleasure; it knows nothing of the sordid miseries that are vulgarly obtruded upon us in poorer, commoner thoroughfares; or if it does it is well-bred enough to conceal the fact. The Green Park makes a pleasaunce along one side of it, half the length of its way; all behind the other side of it lies Mayfair, inhabited, not only in Thackeray's and Disraeli's novels, but in reality, by those happy ones who toil not neither do they spin; in its byways, or just beyond it in Pall Mall, are all the most expensive and exclusive Clubs in London, and some of the most magnificent hotels. Once you grow sensitive to London's varying atmospheres and moods and can readily subserviate your own to them in your walks abroad, you will sympathise with Locker-Lampson's gay eulogy of this happiest of streets:

Piccadilly !—shops, palaces, bustle and breeze,
The whirling of wheels, and the murmur of trees,
By night, or by day, whether noisy or stilly,
Whatever my mood is—I love Piccadilly !

Clarges Street, in which Warrington's stately aunt Lambert had her address, conducts you to Curzon Street, which still retains intact the Curzon Street Chapel that appears in *The Newcomes* as "that elegant and commodious chapel, known as Lady Whittlesea's." The Rev. Charles Honeyman "ventured his little all" on securing a lease of it. Rank and fashion flocked to it then, as they flock to it now, and Thackeray lets you overhear Lord Dozeley and his wife, coming away one Sunday evening among the crowd who have been to the service, discuss Mr. Honeyman and his prospects. Says my Lord, "He can't make less than a thousand a year out of his chapel. . . . A thousand a year, besides the rent of the wine-vaults below the chapel." "Don't, Charles," says his wife, with a solemn look. "Don't ridicule things in that way." "Confound it ! there are wine-vaults under the chapel," answers downright Charles. "It's better to sit over vaults with wine in them than coffins." When Honeyman fell into debt, Mr Sherrick, who was his landlord and ran the wine-vaults, had him arrested and confined in Mr. Moss's spunging-house in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, from which he emerged triumphantly to resume his ministrations at the Chapel with more eclat than ever.

When Rawdon Crawley married Becky Sharp, in *Vanity Fair*, they set up their establishment in Curzon Street, in a furnished house of which Mr. Ruggles, the ex-butler, was landlord. Here Sir Pitt Crawley

stayed with them, whilst his own dismal house in Great Gaunt Street (otherwise Berkeley Street) was being renovated, and on an important occasion, he descended the steps, "in a glittering uniform, his sword between his legs," and with Rawdon and Becky was driven away to join "the line of equipages which was making its way down Piccadilly and St. James's Street towards the old brick Palace," where Becky was to be presented by him at Court. It was the splendid parties Becky gave here that helped to plunge Rawdon into debt, but the house is chiefly memorable as the scene of one of the greatest incidents in all Thackeray's books. We have seen Rawdon arrested in the street and borne off to the Cursitor Street spunging-house; when by the efforts of some of his friends, he was set at liberty, he came back to Curzon Street that night to see his drawing-room windows blazing with light. Letting himself in, he heard laughter in the upper rooms; Becky was singing, and it was Lord Steyne's voice that rose in applause.

"Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out—and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sate. . . . He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face. At the next instant she tried to smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband; and Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks. He, too, attempted a laugh—and came forward holding out his hand. 'What, come back! How d'ye do, Crawley?' he said, the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder.

"There was that in Rawdon's face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. 'I am innocent, Rawdon,' she said, 'before God, I am innocent.' She clung hold of his coat, of

his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings and baubles. 'I am innocent.—Say I am innocent,' she said to Lord Steyne.

"He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. 'You innocent! Damn you,' he screamed out. 'You innocent! Why every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. Innocent, by—! . . . Don't think to frighten me as you have done others. Make way, sir, and let me pass;' and Lord Steyne seized up his hat and, with flame in his eyes and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way. But Rawdon Crawley springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed and bent under his arm. 'You lie, you dog!' said Rawdon. 'You lie, you coward and villain!' And he struck the Peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Becky could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious.

"'Come here,' he said.—She came up at once. 'Take off those things.'—She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms, and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him. 'Throw them down,' he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast, and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald forehead. Steyne wore the scar to his dying day.

"'Come upstairs,' Rawdon said to his wife. 'Don't kill me, Rawdon,' she said. He laughed savagely. 'I want to see if that man lies about the money as he has about me.'"

While he searched her desk and boxes upstairs, Steyne went home, and Rawdon sent him next morning all the bank notes he could find, and left Becky for good, hurt past forgiveness that with this money in

her possession she could have allowed him to remain in prison for debt.

Lord Steyne's town house stood in Gaunt Square, and occupied nearly the whole of one side of it. "The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism—tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone, or picked out of a lighter red." Gaunt House is described as having a vast wall in front, and rustic columns at the great gate. It has been identified by Mr. Lewis Melville with a house answering to Thackeray's description that takes up nearly all one side of Berkeley Square; the "Buckley Square" associated with the immortal Jeames Yellowplush; but Mrs. E. T. Cook is convinced that the original of Gaunt House is to be found in Manchester Square: it now houses the Wallace collection and formerly belonged to the Hertford family, and the Lord Hertford of his time was admittedly the model from which Lord Steyne was drawn.

Mr. Wharton, of Trollope's *Prime Minister*, lived in Manchester Square; Gage, of Harrison Ainsworth's *Spendthrift*, in Dover Street; Major Pendennis was continually to and fro between his rooms in Bury Street and his Club in St. James's Street. Harry Esmond, in *The Virginians* walked up St. James's Street to White's Club on the day the King gave him a cold reception at St. James's Palace. St. James's Church, in Piccadilly, numbered Major Pendennis among its habitual worshippers; strolling along Piccadilly, Harry Esmond and Dick Steele came across Addison poring over a folio volume at the bookshop which was near St. James's Church; and in the same

Church Alfred Lammle, of *Our Mutual Friend*, who lived in Sackville Street, Piccadilly, was married to the unhappy Sophronia. Round the corner, in the same novel, that timorous, quaint little gentleman, Twemlow, lived in Duke Street, St. James's, over a livery stable, which livery stable you may find without difficulty up Mason's Yard; Warrington had chambers in Bond Street, where Sterne died; Fascination Fledgby, of *Our Mutual Friend*, had chambers in the Albany, off Bond Street, where Byron, Lytton, Macaulay, and other of the immortals had chambers before him—but we will not continue the list, for there is scarcely a street out of or near Piccadilly that has not had its famous residents, real or imaginary, and we are not compiling a directory.

CHAPTER XIII

OXFORD STREET, HOLBORN AND CLERKENWELL

I WANT to return along Piccadilly and go by Park Lane to Oxford Street, not because Barnes Newcome lived in Park Lane and Clive and the old Major were so often knocking at his door; nor because Miss Crawley, in *Vanity Fair*, had "an exceedingly snug and well-appointed house in Park Lane," where Becky Sharp stayed with her; but because when you come out by Marble Arch, at the Oxford Street end of that Lane, if you look across to the corner where Edgware Road joins Bayswater Road you are looking at the site of the gallows that stood at Tyburn, from the twelfth until near the end of the eighteenth century. A hundred and fifty years ago it was still a common enough thing to see that grisly procession coming up Holborn and Oxford Street to the corner yonder: the condemned wretch in the cart, with the hangman, his coffin and the chaplain, and a noisy, holiday mob preceding and following to swell the crowd already awaiting them at Tyburn. Jack Sheppard came that shameful pilgrim way to death, and Dick Turpin, Sixteen-String Jack, and many another soiled knight of the road, as you will know if you have read Ainsworth's and other romances of them; and the pages of London's history are dark with similar records of poor, less glamorous wretches,

and of simple or gallant gentlemen who were more unlucky than criminal.

Oxford Street is part of the great road that the Romans built from Watling Street in the city, out along Edgware Road and away into the North; but its chief human interest for us is that its stony pavements were trodden night after night by De Quincey in those hungry weeks when he was homeless in London and saved from death by the charity of a poor street-walker. In Welbeck Street, which turns out of Oxford Street on our left, is the house of Lord George Gordon, of *Barnaby Rudge*; and round Regent Street, also to the left, is the Langham Hotel, where the millionaire of Besant and Rice's *Golden Butterfly*, gave his famous sensational banquet. A little past Regent Street on the right was the Pantheon, to which Fanny Burney's *Evelina* went with Captain, Mrs. and Miss Mirvan, and had a momentous meeting with Lord Orville. There is a Pantheon now on the same spot, built somewhat on the lines of the old one; it is no longer, however, a dancing and pleasure place to which the rank and fashion of the town resort, but is concerned with the bottled-beer industry.

All on our right, between this and Charing Cross Road, are streets that run into the storied region of Soho. Argyll Street will take you through Carnaby Street to Golden Square where Ralph Nickleby lived with Newman Noggs for his clerk, and in Golden Square, too, lived the Kenwigs' family, with whom Newman lodged. Young Moss, in *The Newcomes*, had a father "who does bills and keeps a bric-a-brac shop in Wardour Street;" the shade of Thackeray is all about the district: "I like to walk among the

Hebrews of Wardour Street," he says in *Philip*, "and fancy the place, as it once was, crowded with chairs and gilt chariots, and torches flashing in the hands of running footmen. I have a grim pleasure in thinking that Golden Square was once the resort of the aristocracy, and Monmouth Street the delight of the genteel world. . . . As the late Mr. Gibbon meditated his history leaning against a column in the Capitol, why should I not muse over mine, reclining under an arcade of the Pantheon? Not the Pantheon at Rome, in the Cabbage Market by the Piazza Navona, where the immortal gods were worshipped—the immortal gods who are now dead; but the Pantheon in Oxford Street, ladies, where you purchase feeble pomatums, music, glassware, and baby-linen; and which has its history too. Have not Selwyn, and Walpole, and March, and Carlisle figured there? Has not Prince Florizel flounced through the hall in his rustling domino, and danced there in powdered splendour." And now the Pantheon is not even a bazaar, and where the Prince Regent danced beer is bottled.

George Warrington, when he first married Theo, in *The Virginians*, lived in Dean Street, Soho, and wrote to his wife years later, when he was in London without her, recording "how he had been to look up at the windows of the dear old house in Dean Street, and wondered who was sitting in the chamber where he and Theo had been so happy." Luckworth Crewe and Nancy Lord, roaming on Jubilee night, in *In the Year of Jubilee*, tramped along Oxford Street, and had turned aside into the same Soho byway when the self-confident Crewe remarked, "I know I shall live to be a rich man, just as well as I know that I'm

walking down Dean Street with Miss Lord." Lady Betty, in Tom Taylor's *Lady Clancarty*, tells Lord Clancarty, " I'm Lady Betty Noel, at your service, and to be heard of at my Lord Gainsborough's, in Soho Square," but that was in Soho's more fashionable period, that Thackeray moralised over; and in that same period Jenny Wilmot, of Besant's *Orange Girl*, who had sold oranges outside Drury Lane Theatre before she became a celebrated actress, kept her fashionable Assembly Rooms in Soho Square, and had her windows blazing with light every night, and her chambers filled with masqueraders and card-playing parties. Mr. Jaggers, of *A Tale of Two Cities*, lived in Gerrard Street, Soho, in " a house on the south side of the street, rather a stately house of its kind ; " and Manette Street sufficiently indicates the position once occupied by " the quiet lodgings of Doctor Manette," of *A Tale of Two Cities*, " in a street corner not far from Soho Square "—that wonderful corner for echoes where Lucie Manette sat " listening to the echoing footsteps of the years," and round which revolved so much of the tragedy of Sydney Carton's life and death.

A few paces down the High Street, between Charing Cross Road and New Oxford Street, is the church of St. Giles, past which Dickens went one night, with Inspector Field, as its clock was striking nine, to visit a filthy lodging house, filled with " a dream of baleful faces," in a street that was fifty yards from the Police Station here, and " within call of St. Giles's Church." Wedged in a bend by the church wall, in *The Orange Girl*, " a tavern called the Black Jack stands over against the west front of St. Giles's Church, at the corner of

Denmark Street, with a double entrance, which has proved useful, I believe, on the appearance of constables or Bow Street runners. The Church, which is large and handsome, worthy of better parishioners, stands in the midst of a quarter famous for harbouring, producing and encouraging the most audacious rogues and the most impudent drabs that can be found in the whole of London." You have the character of the house in brief in the frank confession made by the charming Jenny Wilmot to the young Lord who loved and wanted to marry her, and whom she would not marry, for his own sake :

"This," I told my Lord, "is the Black Jack tavern. It is the House of Call for most of the rogues and thieves of Soho. The Church is St Giles's Church. As for my own interest in the house, I was born there: my mother and sister still keep the place between them: it is in good repute among the gentry who frequent it for its kitchen, where there is always a fire for those who cook their own suppers, and for the drinks which are excellent, if not cheap. What is the use of keeping cheap things for thieves? Lightly got, lightly spent. There is nothing cheap at that House. My mother enjoys a reputation for being a Receiver of Stolen Goods—a reputation well deserved, as I have reason to believe. The goods are all stowed away in a stone vault or cellar once belonging to some kind of house—I know not what."

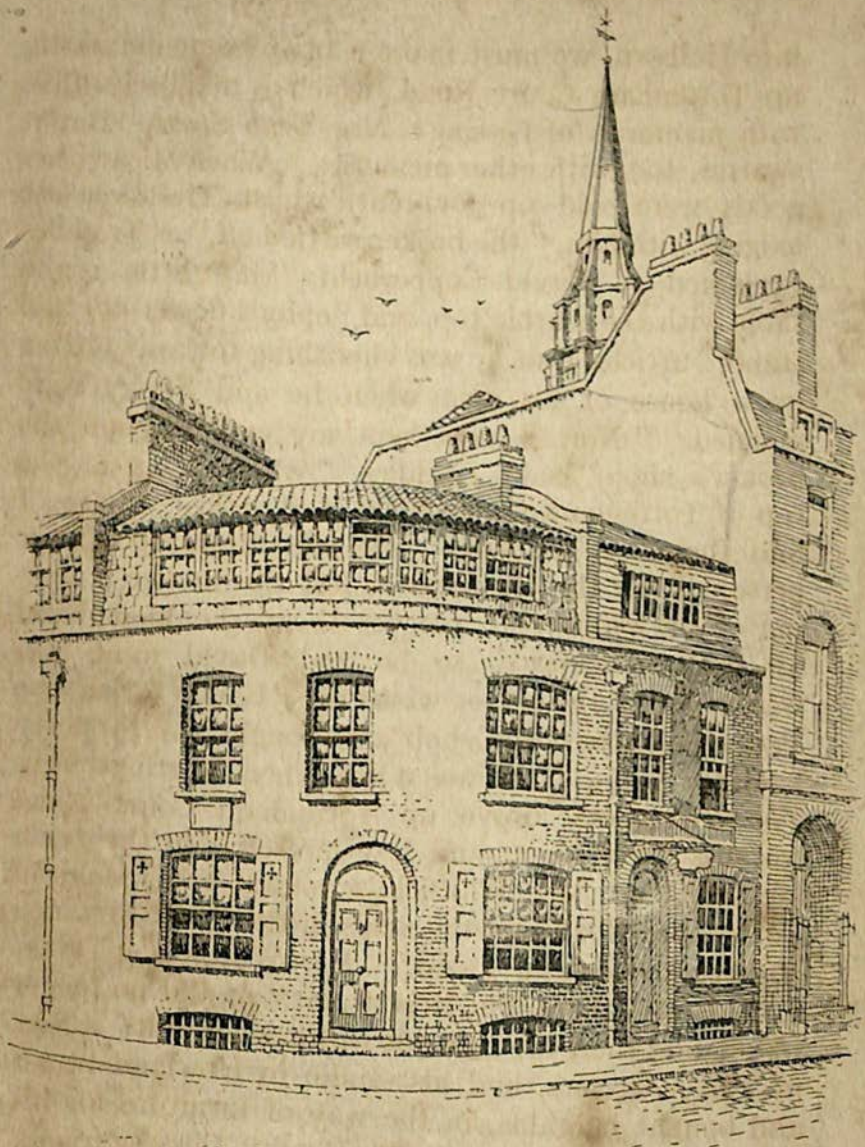
The place actually stood there until a few years ago, and this was its actual reputation. There Jenny went one evening, taking Will Halliday with her, and when they came from the foul, heated atmosphere of the tavern, and the loose talk of its drunken, villainous company, "Outside the tall white spire of St. Giles's, looked down upon us. In the churchyard the white tombs stood in peace, and overhead the moon sailed

in splendour. Jenny drew a long breath: she caught one of the rails of the churchyard and looked in curiously." Here and about the churchyard she had played as a child, and she went away weeping that it seemed so impossible for her ever to forget the past and escape from its influence.

At the other end of Charing Cross Road, on the skirts of Soho, lies Leicester Square, the Leicester Fields in which Harry Esmond fought his fatal duel with Lord Mohun; and one night Will Halliday, of the *Orange Girl*, had an adventure near the same spot. "My way home," he says, "lay through Dean Street as far as St. Ann's Church: then I passed across Leicester Fields into St. Martin's Lane. All this part of the way is greatly infested at night by lurking footpads from the choice purlieus of Seven Dials and Soho." In Green Street he was waylaid and beaten by hired bullies whose employer, Mr. Probus, was anxious to have Halliday disgraced and put out of the way; bleeding and half unconscious he was handed over to the watch, and charged with robbing one of his assailants, who posed as a countryman whom the other ruffians had rescued. Seven Dials has been shorn of its worst features, but a good deal of it is recognisably the same as when Dickens wrote of it in the *Sketches by Boz*; and I have the vividest notion of the barber's shop of Monsieur Morbleu, in one of its grimy little streets, the scene of so much that happened in Moncrieff's amusing and once popular farce, *Monsieur Tonson.*

In Newman Street, to the north of Oxford Street, Mr. Turveydrop, of *Bleak House*, had his dancing academy; and before we go on along Oxford Street

into Holborn, we must make a brief excursion north, up Tottenham Court Road, which is sombrely alive with memories of Gissing's *New Grub Street.* But it swarms, too, with other memories. When Micawber's goods were sold up for rent, whilst Traddles was lodging with him, " the broker carried off," as Traddles explained to David Copperfield, " my little round table with the marble top, and Sophy's flower-pot and stand," articles that he was cherishing towards setting up a house of his own when he and Sophy were married. " Now I have kept my eye since on the broker's shop," said Traddles, " which is up at the top of Tottenham Court Road, and at last, to-day, I find them out for sale." He was afraid to appear personally in the transaction, lest the broker, knowing of his anxiety to recover them, should demand an impossible price, so he and David went and waited round the corner whilst Mrs. Barkis (otherwise Peggoty) entered the shop and bought the property back for him. There was a day when Warrington, in *The Virginians,* drove up Tottenham Court Road towards Marylebone, and lost himself " in the green lanes behind Mr. Whitfield's round Tabernacle in Tottenham Road and the fields in the midst of which Middlesex Hospital stood." Mr. Whitfield's Tabernacle is still there, but it is a new one and no longer round, and there are no fields within sight of it. Clive, in *The Newcomes,* had his studio in Howland Street and bought bargains, in the way of furniture for his house, in Tottenham Court Road; Clive's friend, James Binney lived in Fitzroy Square ; and for a time, before his marriage Clive had rooms in Charlotte Street, which is out of Fitzroy Square. But the drab



CLERKENWELL CLOSE
Fred^k Adcock:

"You have only to linger awhile in the Close to-day to realise how wonderfully Gissing has transferred the life and very atmosphere of it into his story."

Chapter 13

hues and settled dull atmosphere of this neighbourhood are nowhere so prevailing as in *New Grub Street*. When Edwin Reardon came to London to embark upon that literary career that brought him so much of disappointment and misery, he lived here for most of the first four years. "From a certain point in Tottenham Court Road there is visible a certain garret window in a certain street which runs parallel with that thoroughfare; for the greater part of these four years the garret in question was Reardon's home." He used to study in the British Museum Reading Room, "the valley of the shadow of books," that is to the east of Tottenham Court Road; in the British Museum too worked Marian Yule, and Jasper Milvain, overtaking her in Tottenham Court Road, walked with her as far as Mornington Crescent, in Hampstead Road, Camden Town, where he lived, and whence she went on by bus to her father's house near Regent's Park. Gissing himself, in his darkest days, lived off Tottenham Court Road, and there, in Percy Street, lived that cheerful bohemian Albert Smith.

If you push northwards through Camden Town, St. Pancras, Kentish Town and Hampstead, it is all haunted ground. Ben Jonson puts most of the scenes of his *Tale of a Tub* in Kentish Town; the rest are at Tottenham Court, St. Pancras and Marylebone; and the whole of it is thickly sown with local allusions. Heywood, too, has a scene of his *Wise Woman of Hogsdon* at Kentish Town, outside the house of Mother Redcap, another wise woman, who has a noted tavern at Kentish Town named after her to this day. You have a vision of Defoe's *Colonel Jack* hastening up

Tottenham Court Road, which he has entered out of the fields, bent on one of his nefarious enterprises; and farther on, by St. Pancras Church, "Upon the path, within the bank, on the side of the road going towards Kentish Town, two of our gang, Will and one of the others met a single gentleman, walking apace towards the town; being almost dark, Will cried, 'Mark, ho!' which, it seems, was the word at which we were all to stand still at a distance, come in if he wanted help, and give a signal if anything appeared that was dangerous. Will steps up to the gentleman, stops him, and put the question, that is, 'Sir, your money?' The gentleman seeing he was alone, struck at him with his cane; but Will, a nimble, strong fellow, flew in upon him, and, with struggling, got him down; then he begged for his life, Will having told him with an oath that he would cut his throat."

At this juncture a hackney coach came driving along, and whilst Will held the gentleman down and rifled his pockets, the rest of the gang attacked the coach, robbed the persons in it, and then they all made off with their booty, down Tottenham Court Road, across St. Giles's and Piccadilly, and into Hyde Park; here they robbed another coach between Hyde Park Gate and Knightsbridge, and hurrying on did more business of the same kind in the same night at Chelsea. In Somers Town, which adjoins Camden Town, resided Mr. Snawley, of *Nicholas Nickleby*, in a mean street "in the second of four little houses, one story high, with green shutters," and with him Mr. Wackford Squeers lodged, when he stayed longer in town than usual. Dickens himself lived, in his boyhood, at Johnson Street, Somers Town, where his

house has been recently marked. In Little College Street (now College Place), Camden Town, where also Dickens himself lived, Mr. Micawber had a house near the Veterinary College, when Tommy Traddles was lodging with him and suffered from the rapacity of the broker's man. Farther out, at Hampstead, Walter Hartwright, of Clement's Inn, in Wilkie Collins's *Woman in White*, having arrived in his walk over Hampstead Heath at a point "where four roads meet—the road to Hampstead, along which I had returned; the road to Finchley; the road to West End; and the road back to London;" (which is clearly at the end of Platt's Lane) had turned Londonwards about one o'clock in the morning when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder from behind and started round to face "a solitary woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments." At Jack Straw's Castle, on the Heath, where Dickens often dined, Fred Bayham, in *The Newcomes*, went to have a chop, with his poor friend Kitely; and on the verge of the Heath, towards Highgate, Mrs. Bardell, of *Pickwick*, went with Master Bardell and a party of friends to take the air and have refreshment in the pleasant tea-garden of *The Spaniards*.

Continuing up Oxford Street, from Tottenham Court Road, you come to Hart Street, where young George Osborn was a day boy at the school of the Rev. Lawrence Veal, and Josh and Major Dobbin arrived at the door in a carriage one day to see him; and the opening scene of *Monsieur Tonson* happens out of doors in "Hart Street, Bloomsbury." The first turning to the left in Hart Street takes you to the British Museum, in and out of which went those

people of Gissing's *New Grub Street*, and into which Bob Hewett took Clem Peckover, in *The Nether World*, because years ago his father had once taken him there on a public holiday. Egremont, of *Thyrza*, had his permanent lodgings in Great Russell Street, which is the street of the Museum, where he was frequently busy with research work; and Gilbert Grail came haunting those Great Russell Street rooms, when Thyrza had vanished and Egremont was absent, and he suspected the two had gone away together. Past the Museum, Bloomsbury Square lies to the right of you and Russell Square on your left. In Bloomsbury Square was Lord Mansfield's house, that was burned down by the Gordon rioters in *Barnaby Rudge*; a crime for which the law hanged some of the rioters here in the Square. John Sedley, of *Vanity Fair*, had his house in Russell Square; here Amelia lived and from here was married to George Osborn. Osborn's father had his house also in the Square, and after old Sedley was ruined and sold up, and had removed to Fulham, after George Osborn had died at Waterloo, and Amelia, left very poor and never yet acknowledged by her husband's family, had consented to let her little son be brought up by his wealthy grandfather, there were days when she yearned to see the child, and then—"she takes a long walk into London—yes, as far as Russell Square, and rests on the stone by the railing of the garden opposite Mr. Osborne's house. . . . She can look up and see the drawing-room window illuminated, and at about nine o'clock, the chamber in the upper story where Georgy sleeps." One Sunday, going so, she saw him come across the Square with his aunt and the footman on

the way to church, and followed them, "until she came to the Foundling Church, into which she went. There she sat in a place whence she could see the head of the boy under his father's tombstone. Many hundred fresh children's voices rose up there and sang hymns to the Father Beneficent and . . . his mother could not see him for awhile, through the mist that dimmed her eyes."

The Foundling Church is part of the Foundling Hospital, which is in Great Coram Street, and the name of it is inseparably linked with the story of *Little Dorrit*, where Mr. Meagles explains to Clennam how it was he and Mrs. Meagles came to adopt Tattycoram as a maid for their daughter:

"One day, five or six years ago now, when we took Pet to church at the Foundling—you have heard of the Foundling Hospital in London? Similar to the Institution for the Found Children in Paris?"

"I have seen it."

"Well! One day when we took Pet to church there to hear the music—because, as practical people, it is the business of our lives to show her everything that we think can please her—Mother (my usual name for Mrs. Meagles) began to cry so, that it was necessary to take her out. 'What's the matter, Mother?' said I, when we had brought her a little round, 'you are frightening Pet, my dear.' 'Yes, I know that, Father,' says Mother, 'but I think it's through my loving her so much that it ever came into my head.' 'That ever what came into your head, Mother?' 'O, dear, dear!' cried Mother, breaking out afresh, 'when I saw all those children ranged tier above tier, and appealing from the father none of them has ever known on earth, to the great Father of us all in Heaven, I thought does any wretched mother ever come here and look among those young faces, wondering which is the poor child she brought into this forlorn world, never through

all its life to know her love, her kiss, her face, her voice, even her name!' Now, that was practical in Mother, and I told her so. I said, 'Mother, that's what I call practical in you, my dear.' . . . So I said next day: Now, Mother, I have a proposition to make which I think you'll approve of. Let us take one of those same children to be a little maid to Pet. . . . And that's the way we came by Tattycoram."

Returning through Russell Square and Bloomsbury Square, down Southampton Row, where George Warrington had one of his various London lodgings, we get back into Oxford Street, just where it joins Holborn. Nearly facing Kingsway until lately was that notable Kingsgate Street, in which Sairey Gamp lodged over the shop of Poll Sewddlepipes, but no trace of it survives; passing Chancery Lane on our right, we come to Gray's Inn on our left; Justice Shallow, in *Henry IV.*, boasts that in his wild youth, he had a fight "with Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn;" but much more recently Mr. Pickwick went in by this ancient archway many a time on his way to see his lawyer, Mr. Perker, in Gray's Inn Square. Mr. Percy Noakes, of the *Sketches by Boz*, had chambers in the same Square, and his friend, Mr. Loggins, the solicitor, who went on the steam excursion with him, had offices in the contiguous Boswell Court. After his marriage, Traddles had a small set of chambers in Holborn Court, Gray's Inn, and when David Copperfield called on him there, he found him very happy, in spite of the overcrowding occasioned by five of his wife's sisters staying with them on a visit, sleeping three in one room and two in another, whilst he and his wife were stowed away by night in a very small room in the roof.

Gray's Inn Road used to be Gray's Inn Lane, when it was narrower, and Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, writing a few years ago, says "a person who died some years since used to speak to me of a haystack within his recollection at the bottom of Gray's Inn Lane;" which reminds me of Mr. Transfer, in Foote's play, *The Minor*, for running over a list of his possessions Transfer says, "Stay, stay, then again, at my country house, the bottom of Gray's Inn Lane, there's a hundred ton of fine hay, only damaged a little last winter for want of thatching." It was down such a still somewhat rural Gray's Inn Lane that Fielding's Tom Jones and Partridge came by coach from St. Alban's on their first journey to London, and put up at the Bull and Gate, which has vanished from Holborn. Straight across Holborn from the end of Gray's Inn Road, and you pass under the archway into Staple Inn, which stands as you find it in *Edwin Drood*:

"Behind the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses some centuries of age still stand looking on the public way, as if disconsolately looking for the Old Bourne that has long run dry, is a little nook composed of two irregular quadrangles, called Staple Inn. It is one of those nooks, the turning into which out of the clashing street, imparts to the relieved pedestrian the sensation of having put cotton in his ears and velvet soles on his boots. It is one of those nooks where a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to one another, 'Let us play at country,' and where a few feet of garden-mould and a few feet of gravel enable them to do that refreshing violence to their tiny understandings. Moreover, it is one of those nooks that are legal nooks; and it contains a little Hall, with a little lantern in its roof. . . . Neither wind nor sun favoured Staple Inn one December afternoon towards six o'clock, when it was filled

with fog, and candles shed murky and blurred rays through the windows of all the then-occupied sets of chambers, notably from a set of chambers in a corner house in the little inner quadrangle, presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription :

P
J T
1747.

In which set of chambers, never having troubled his head about the inscription, unless to bethink himself at odd times on glancing up at it, that haply it might mean Perhaps John Thomas, or Perhaps Joe Tyler, sat Mr. Grewgious writing by his fire."

For these were the chambers of that grim, kindly old lawyer, and, with those initials over their doorway, there is no mistaking them. After the murder—or supposed murder, of Edwin Drood, Rosa came to Grewgious there, and he took a room for her in the hotel up Furnival's Inn across the road in Holborn. Mr. Tartar's chambers were also in Staple Inn ; and to Staple Inn, to refresh himself with a sight of the garden, Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer of *Bleak House*, used to come round from Took's Court for his evening's airing.

Traddles, before he was married, lived up " behind the parapet of a house in Castle Street, Holborn," which is the next turning to Staple Inn, but has been stupidly renamed Furnival Street. Thither David Copperfield went with Mr. Dick and found Traddles hard at work in a small room, among the furniture of which were the flower-pot stand and the little round table they had rescued from the broker's shop in Tottenham Court Road. Nearly facing this street,

across the other side of Holborn, is Furnival's Inn (all sadly modernised), where Dickens lived when he was writing *Pickwick*, and where John Westlock, of *Martin Chuzzlewit* was living when Tom Pinch set out to see him and lost his way and wandered as far as the Monument before he found it. Over the road again is Barnard's Inn, where Pip, of *Great Expectations*, had his chambers, and I have always believed that Dampit, of Middleton's old comedy, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, lived in Fetter Lane; for one scene of the play is in his house, and coming home he remarks on the unsavoury atmosphere in his room and exclaims, "Fie upon't, what a choice of stinks here is! . . . Foh! I think they burn horns in Barnard's Inn. If ever I smelt such an abominable stink, usury forsake me!" and Barnard's Inn stretches immediately behind this end of Fetter Lane; there was another entrance from Fetter Lane into it before it was improved almost beyond recognition.

Once more across the road, almost fronting Fetter Lane, is the site—now occupied by a railway goods office—of that Bull Inn where Mr. Lewsome lay ill and Mrs. Gamp nursed him; at Holborn Circus, we diverge into Thavies Inn, which, unlike most of the Inns, has no archway; it had one in its prime, but is now a plain, open street with a few old houses left in it, one of which may very well be the house of Mrs. Jellaby, of *Bleak House*. Esther Summerson and the Wards in Chancery were to pass the night at Mrs. Jellaby's, when they were in town for the making of that application to the Lord Chancellor for appointing Esther companion to Ada Clare. Mr. Guppy escorted them round from Old Square, and they

arrived here to join a crowd that was gathered before the house, because, as Mr. Guppy ascertained, "One of the young Jellaby's been and got his head through the area railings;" and it is only the older houses that have these.

Thavies Inn branches from one side of Holborn Circus, and Hatton Garden from the other, and the house at 53, Hatton Garden was the old police-court presided over by a Mr. Laing, an unjust and intolerant magistrate, who was the original of Mr. Fang in *Oliver Twist*; you may learn from Forster how Dickens contrived to be smuggled into that police-office one morning in order that he might witness Mr. Laing's habitual outbreaks and model on him the magistrate who bullied Oliver. Next to Hatton Garden is Ely Place, the site of Ely House, where Shakespeare puts the death-scene of John of Gaunt, in *Richard II.*, and it were glory enough for it that it was in this place old Gaunt uttered his nobly patriotic valediction:

> This royal throne of kings, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea . . .
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
> This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
> Feared by their breed and famous by their birth . . .
> England, bound in with the triumphant sea . . .
> That England that was wont to conquer others,
> Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

Here was the garden of the Bishop of Ely's house in Holborn, where Gloucester had noticed good straw-

berries growing, and bade the Bishop send for some of them, in that scene in the Tower. David Copperfield had a note one morning, at his rooms in Buckingham Street, Strand, from Agnes Wickfield, to say she was in London and "staying at the house of papa's agent, Mr. Waterbrook, in Ely Place, Holborn," and thither went David that day, and the next, when he sat down to dinner with her and Uriah Heep here, and with Tommy Traddles and certain of Mr. Waterbrook's family circle, including, you remember, Hamlet's Aunt.

Ahead of us, from Holborn Circus, runs Holborn Viaduct, and over the Viaduct from Clerkenwell went Bob Hewett and Penelope, otherwise Pennyloaf, Candy, in *The Nether World*, making for Holborn Viaduct Station with a crowd of similar youths and maidens to spend the August Bank Holiday (which was also Bob's and Pennyloaf's wedding day) at the Crystal Palace. There was trouble at the Palace; Clem Peckover, who was one of the party, jealous of Pennyloaf, had lured Bob Hewett into falling out with her cavalier for the day, Jack Bartley, and as they were all streaming out from Holborn Viaduct Station that night, on the road home, one of Clem's lot squirted some dirty fluid over Pennyloaf's dress and spoilt it. Bob Hewett was prompt to avenge her, but Bartley evading an immediate conflict, ran away, Bob in hot pursuit, and all the others streaming after, towards Clerkenwell Green. On the way there, we turn aside for a moment, up Charles Street, out of Farringdon Street, as far as Bleeding Heart Yard, where Daniel Doyce, of *Little Dorrit*, had his factory; where Plornish lived in the parlour of a large residence that was

let off to various tenants, and John Baptist Cavaletto, came to lodge at the top of the same house. Landlord of all the houses in Bleeding Heart Yard was the patriarchal Mr. Casby, and into the yard periodically flitted Mr. Panks, who collected his rents for him. It has been too much knocked down and rebuilt for one to make any attempt at identifying Doyce's warehouse, or Plornish's dwelling, but it is something that over this ground so many of Dickens's people came and went, and that here, at last, Panks unmasked the Patriarch, and in a frenzy of righteous scorn of his hypocrisy, whipped out a pair of scissors and shore off his benevolent white hair and beard and showed him to his harried tenants for the miserable old rascal that he was.

Farther up Farringdon Street, where it has become Farringdon Road, is Farringdon Road Buildings, a gloomy pile of barrack-like Workmen's Dwellings, where John Hewett, of *The Nether World*, joined a Mr. and Mrs. Eagles in the tenancy of a flat up on the fifth story, after his wife's death. Across the barren courtyard of the Buildings, up the stone steps to that flat, went Hewett, and his younger children, Tom and Anne; and Sidney Kirkwood, occasionally, when he called to see them; and up the steps to it went Clara Hewett with her father, when he fetched her home, after her brief career on the stage, where a jealous rival actress had flung vitriol at the beauty of her face and made it repellently hideous:

"The economy prevailing in to-day's architecture takes good care that no depressing circumstances shall be absent from the dwellings in which the poor find shelter. What terrible barracks, those Farringdon Road Buildings! Vast

sheer walls, unbroken by even an attempt at ornament; row above row of windows in the mud-coloured surface, upwards, upwards, lifeless eyes, murky openings that tell of barrenness, disorder, comfortlessness within. . . . An inner courtyard, asphalted, swept clean—looking up to the sky as from a prison. Acres of these edifices, the tinge of grime declaring the relative dates of their erection; millions of tons of brute brick and mortar, crushing the spirit as you gaze. Barracks, in truth; housing for the army of industrialism, an army fighting with itself, rank against rank, man against man, that the survivors may have whereon to feed. Pass by in the night, and strain imagination to picture the weltering mass of human weariness, of bestiality, of unmerited dolour, of hopeless hope, of crushed surrender, tumbled together within these forbidding walls. Clara hated the place from her first hour in it. It seemed to her that the air was poisoned with the odour of an unclean crowd. The yells of children at play in the courtyard tortured her nerves; the regular sounds on the staircase, day after day repeated at the same hours, incidents of the life of poverty, irritated her sick brain and filled her with despair to think that as long as she lived she could never hope to rise again above this world to which she was born."

This despair made her desperate and unscrupulous. In the days when she had begun to believe she had the world at her feet, she slighted Sidney Kirkwood and rejected him; now she set herself to recapture him; her affliction appealed to his pity and his chivalry; he steeled himself against his love for Jane Snowden and with a feeling that in Clara's extremity, he must be true to his love of the past, he was easily lured back to his allegiance to her. On the night when she was planning in her mind the interview at which Kirkwood was to succumb, she stood looking from her window in Farringdon Road Buildings over the innumerable chimneys of the City:

"Directly in front, rising mist-detached from the lower masses of building, stood in black majesty the dome of St Paul's; its vastness suffered no diminution from this high outlook, rather was exaggerated by the flying scraps of misty vapour which softened its outline and at times gave it the appearance of floating on a vague troubled sea. Somewhat nearer, amid many spires and steeples, lay the surly bulk of Newgate. . . . Nearer again, the markets of Smithfield, Bartholomew's Hospital, the tract of modern deformity, cleft by a gulf of railway, which spreads between Clerkenwell Road and Charterhouse Street. Down in Farringdon Street the carts, waggons, vans, cabs, omnibuses, crossed and intermingled in a steaming splash-bath of mud; human beings, reduced to their due paltriness, seemed to toil in exasperation along the strips of pavement, bound on errands which were a mockery, driven automaton-like by forces they neither understood nor could resist. . . . Then her eye fell upon the spire of St James's Church, on Clerkenwell Green, whose bells used to be so familiar to her."

So looking out over the City, from her high window in this drab, bleak, unhomelike mass of Workmen's Dwellings, brooding on the hopes of her past, and despairing of her future, Clara Hewett resolved to reassert her earlier claim on Kirkwood's love, and went out, cloaking her marred face, and round by Clerkenwell Road, to St. John's Square, and sent a boy into the place where Kirkwood was employed with a letter that brought him to her that night, and when he left her he had been drawn into asking her again to be his wife, and she had consented.

From Clerkenwell Green to Islington, Gissing has made all this dreary tract of shabby houses peculiarly his own. In one of these streets of Clerkenwell, "towards that part of its confines which is nearest to the Charterhouse," Dickens, in *Barnaby Rudge*,

put the shop of Dolly Varden's father, the locksmith; and "in a narrow and a dirty street," somewhere among the "working-jeweller population taking sanctuary about the church in Clerkenwell," he put the shop of Silas Wegg's friend, Mr. Venus, the taxidermist, of *Our Mutual Friend*; on Clerkenwell Green itself, the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates picked the pocket of old Mr. Brownlow, as he stood reading at a bookstall, and bolted, leaving Oliver Twist to be overtaken and charged with their crime. But if you have read *The Nether World* (to say nothing of *The Unclassed*, whose Mr. Abraham Woodstock lives in St. John's Street Road) you cannot go through Clerkenwell without being conscious that you are walking in Gissing's country.

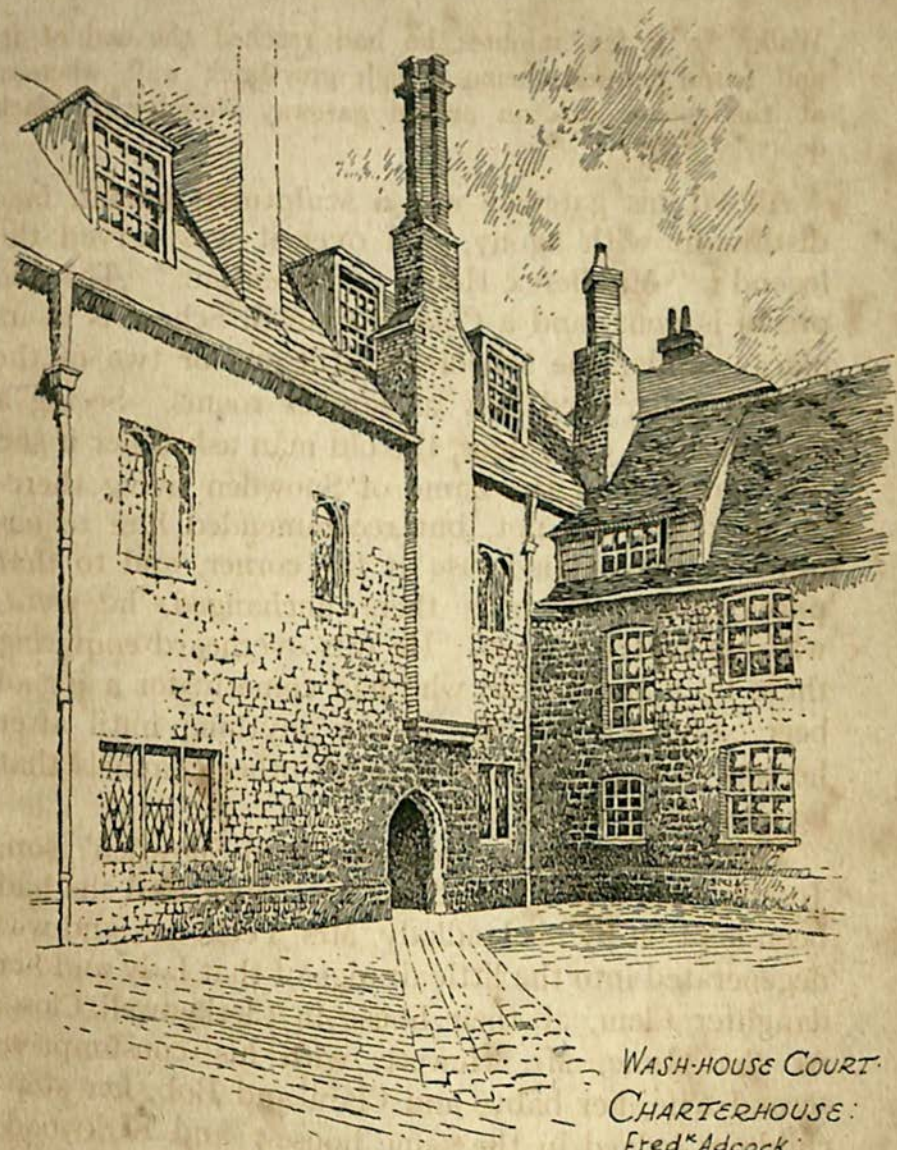
On the very first page of *The Nether World*, you see old Mr. Snowden returned to England after long absence in Australia, walk slowly across Clerkenwell Green and pause by the graveyard of St. James's Church, looking about him. He had used to live near by, and is here in search of the son he had left behind him:

"The burial ground by which he had paused was as little restful to the eye as are most of those discoverable in the byways of London. The small trees that grew about it shivered in their leaflessness; the rank grass was wan under the failing day; most of the stones leaned this way or that, emblems of neglect (they were very white at the top, and darkened downwards till the damp soil made them black), and certain cats and dogs were prowling or sporting among the graves. . . . The old man had fixed his eyes half absently on the inscription of a gravestone near him; a lean cat springing out between the iron railings seemed to recall his attention, and with a sigh he went forward along the narrow street which is called St James's

Walk. In a few minutes he had reached the end of it, and found himself facing a high grey-brick wall, wherein, at this point, was an arched gateway closed with black doors."

Above this gateway was a sculptured human face distraught with agony, and over it was carved the legend: "Middlesex House of Detention." This old prison is gone, and a County Council School is in its place; under the school are still one or two of the ancient cells, used now as lumber rooms. Seeing a woman at an open door, the old man asked her if she knew anyone of the name of Snowden living thereabouts; she did not, but recommended him to enquire at the public-house at the corner, and to that public-house, which is there unchanged, he went, with no better success. He was overheard enquiring there by a small child who had come in for a jug of beer. She was too shy to say anything until after he was gone, and it was through other channels that he eventually found her.

This small girl was the daughter of Snowden's son, Joseph, who had deserted her long since, and she had been kept on by his landlady, Mrs. Peckover, and was degenerated into the little drudge of that lady and her daughter Clem, at their house in Clerkenwell Close. At that time, Mr. Hewett, with his consumptive second wife, her baby, and Clara and Bob, her step-children, lodged in the same house; and Kirkwood, Hewett's friend and already in love with Clara, came often to it to see them, and took a sympathetic interest in the starveling little Jane who slaved and slept in the gloomy basement. You have only to linger a while in the Close to-day to realise how wonderfully



WASH-HOUSE COURT.
CHARTERHOUSE:
Fred^k Adcock:

"In Wash-house Court they show you what is traditionally the room in which Colonel Newcome lived and died."

Chapter 13

Gissing has transferred the life and very atmosphere of it into his story.

Kirkwood worked in St. John's Square, for a certain "H. Lewis, Working Jeweller," and Gissing's description makes it an easy task to identify the place:

"His workshop was in St. John's Square. Of all the areas in London thus defined, this Square of St. John is probably the most irregular in outline. It is cut in two by Clerkenwell Road, and the buildings which compose it form such a number of recesses, of abortive streets, of shadowed alleys, that from no point of the Square can anything like a general view of its totality be obtained. The exit from it on the south side is by St. John's Lane, at the entrance to which stands a survival from a buried world—the embattled and windowed archway which is all that remains above ground of the great Priory of St. John of Jerusalem. Here dwelt the Knights Hospitallers, in days when Clerkenwell was a rural parish, distant by a long stretch of green country from the walls of London. But other and nearer memories are revived by St. John's Arch. In the rooms above the gateway dwelt, a hundred and fifty years ago, one Edward Cave, publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and there many a time sat a journeyman author of his, by name Samuel Johnson, too often *impransus*. There it was that the said Samuel once had his dinner handed to him behind a screen, because of his unpresentable costume, when Cave was entertaining an aristocratic guest. . . . St. John's Arch had a place in Sidney Kirkwood's earliest memories. From the window of his present workshop he could see its grey battlements."

And when he was a boy he lived with his father who "occupied part of a house in St. John's Lane, not thirty yards from the Arch: he was a printer's roller maker, and did but an indifferent business." Throughout most of the *Nether World*, Kirkwood now

has his lodgings in Tysoe Street, a dismal street, with a shop or two in it and a few old, faded houses, five minutes north of the Green, out of Exmouth Street (down which Oliver Twist came when he first entered London with the Artful Dodger), but in the latter stages of the story he had removed to Red Lion Street, which is next to St. John's Lane, in the Clerkenwell Road. Old Snowden, in his young married days, lived in Hill Street; behind the School which has replaced the House of Detention at the top of St. James's Walk, is Rosoman Street, a long, unlovely street in one of whose public-houses Jack Bartley met the man who induced him and Bob Hewett to embark on a disastrous coining enterprise; and in Merlin Place, near Rosoman Street, Bob and Pennyloaf lived after they were married. It was by St. James's Church that Jack Bartley made a stand on that August Bank-Holiday night when the riotous party returned from the Crystal Palace, and by the time two policemen came and separated them, Bob was torn and bleeding, and Pennyloaf's wedding-dress was in rags from the furious mauling of the jealous Clem Peckover. Clerkenwell Green, with Radical and Socialist speakers haranguing crowds on it of a Sunday, and this old church of St. James stand in the heart of the *Nether World*; nearly all its people lived within sight of the church spire and within sound of its bells; but one incident that remains curiously clear in my recollection happened in Myddleton Passage, where Bob Hewett asked Pennyloaf to meet him in the early days of his wooing. Myddleton Passage is up the northern end of St. John's Street Road, across Rosebery Avenue, and behind Sadler's

Wells Theatre, and it is now as when Gissing etched it:

"It is a narrow paved walk between brick walls seven feet high; on the one hand lies the New River Head, on the other are small gardens behind Myddleton Square. The branches of a few trees hang over; there are doors, seemingly never opened, belonging one to each garden; a couple of gas lamps shed feeble light. Pennyloaf paced the length of the Passage several times, meeting no one. Then a policeman came along with echoing tread, and eyed her suspiciously. She had to wait more than a quarter of an hour before Bob Hewett made his appearance. Greeting her with a nod and a laugh, he took up a leaning position against the wall, and began to put questions concerning the state of things at her home."

Presently he enquired if Pennyloaf had seen anything of Clem, and confessed that she had "got her back up" a bit about them; and just then "a man's figure appeared at a little distance, and almost immediately withdrew again round a winding of the Passage." Bob suspected it was Jack Bartley, already under Clem's influence and ready at any time to do her bidding, and he ran off sharply to see. He had not gone far when Clem came running from the other end of the Passage, and in a moment had flung herself upon Pennyloaf and was striking and tearing at her tigerishly. Bob hastened back to the rescue; gripped Clem's arms and forced them behind her back, and so holding her, cried to Pennyloaf, "You run off 'ome! If she tries this on again, I'll murder her!" Pennyloaf's "hysterical cries and frantic invectives" were still making the Passage ring, but Bob repeating his command, she obeyed, and when

she was well out of sight, he released Clem, and laughed scornfully at her as she went off vowing vengeance. But so long as the Passage is there, the sight and hideous noise of that combat remain in it for anyone who has read the *Nether World*.

Being so far north, we will go back down the Goswell Road, in which Mr. Pickwick lived when he lodged with Mrs. Bardell; cross Clerkenwell Road again where it joins Old Street, turn off to the right out of Aldersgate Street into Charterhouse Square, and end our pilgrimage in the Charterhouse, where Thackeray went to school, and afterwards sent so many of his characters. Philip Firmin was brought to it by his mother, in *Philip*, and was laid up ill in it during the holidays in a room whose windows opened into the Square. References to the Charterhouse crop up in several of Thackeray's minor works, but the old school has its principal place in *The Newcomes*. Clive Newcome belonged to it, like his father before him, and when the Colonel returns from India and goes to see his son there, they "walk the playground together, that gravelly flat, as destitute of herbage as the Arabian desert, but, nevertheless, in the language of the place, called the green. They walk the green, and they pace the cloisters, and Clive shows his father his own name of Thomas Newcome carved upon one of the arches forty years ago."

Pendennis, too, was a Charterhouse boy, and towards the end of *The Newcomes*, writing as the supposed author of that book, he says:

"Mention has been made once or twice in the course of this history of the Grey Friar's School—where the Colonel and Clive and I had been brought

up—an ancient foundation of the time of James I., still subsisting in the heart of London city. The death-day of the founder of the place is still kept solemnly by Cistercians. In their chapel, where assemble the boys of the school, and the fourscore old men of the Hospital, the founder's tomb stands, a huge edifice, emblazoned with heraldic decorations and clumsy carved allegories. There is an old Hall, a beautiful specimen of the architecture of James's time—an old Hall? many old halls; old staircases, old passages, old chambers decorated with old portraits, walking in the midst of which we walk, as it were, in the early seventeenth century." He goes on to describe a Founder's Day, and to tell how attending it on the 12th of a December, he looked up from the service in the chapel and saw seated among the black-coated old pensioners Colonel Newcome, fallen on evil days and come here for refuge, to end his life as one of the Poor Brethren of the Charterhouse. On a later occasion, Pendennis comes with Ethel Newcome to visit the Colonel; he chances to be out for the day; but they go into his room, and Ethel looks "at the pictures of Clive and his boy; the two sabres crossed over the mantlepiece; the Bible laid on the table by the old latticed window." In this same room the Colonel lay ill at last and dying, and you remember the close of his story: "At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo,

he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master."

No scholars are there now; the school has been removed outside London; but you may see the place just as Thackeray pictures it, and it is still a quiet haven for the Poor Brethren of the Charterhouse. The chapel bell that Colonel Newcome heard still rings at the usual hour every evening, as they tell you it has rung every evening for some three centuries; and in Washouse Court they show you what is traditionally the room in which the Colonel lived and died.

Since we must end somewhere, we may as well end here, against Smithfield, where we began. Not that our theme is exhausted; it is inexhaustible. All our great English authors have spent some of their time in London, from Chaucer downwards; more than half of them have lived many years in it; many of them—I believe I should not be far wrong even if I said half of them—were born in it, and as often as not it is their personal experiences of it that they have written into the lives of their characters. It is always decaying, and passing away, and renewing itself. Once London was as full of houses and streets associated with the imaginary men and women of the Elizabethan dramatists (those loyalest of Londoners) as now it is of associations with the imaginary people of Dickens, Thackeray, Gissing; as to-morrow it will be of similar associations with the characters of the imaginative writers of to-day; and it is because, for all its stern realities, it is such a wonderland of glorious dreams that every true Londoner sighs,

in his heart, with that good cockney, Henry S. Leigh :

The haunts we revelled in to-day
  We lose to-morrow morning ; .
As one by one are swept away
  In turn without a warning. . . .
No nook nor cranny dear to me
  Should undergo removal,
Though Progress went on either knee
  To beg for my approval !

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TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hemendra Kothari
on 06 November, 2019